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A Qualitative Study Utilizing Non-Fiction African-American Folktales: Process and Product with Struggling Second, Third, and Fifth Graders in North Louisiana

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A QUALITATIVE STUDY UTILIZING NON-FICTION
AFRICAN-AMERICAN FOLKTALES:
PROCESS AND PRODUCT WITH STRUGGLING SECOND, THIRD, AND
FIFTH GRADERS IN NORTH LOUISIANA

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The College of Human Sciences & Education
School of Education

by

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This dissertation study is dedicated to my family members. My parents the late Maudry Lewis Guidry and Clarence Guidry, Sr.; my brothers, Rudy James Guidry and Claude Joseph Guidry. My sons, Henry Russell Griffin, Jr. and Crandall Kyle Griffin along with my other siblings Charles, Clarence Jr., Judy, Geneva, Florene, Claudette, and a host of nieces and nephews. Also, I would like to thank Dr. Matthew Guidry and a personal friend for their help and support. All of whom encouraged me to pursue my dreams. I will always keep God in my presence who has helped me to advance in my studies.

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PREFACE

A qualitative study utilizing non-fiction African American folktales: Process and Product with struggling second, third, and fifth graders in North Louisiana, is one of the most important study I had ever done. This study is important because it teaches children how to develop an appreciation for cultural diversity and at the same time it teaches children how to show respect for each other. Results of this study will help teachers build children's self-esteem about learning their cultural heritage.

Learning about cultural heritage through folktales will provide children the skills that they will need in order to become fluent readers. Learning about each other's differences likes and dislikes will help students get along with each other. Introducing folktales to students through cultural awareness is a lifelong gift.

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation presents a qualitative of a study utilizing non-fiction African-American Folktales with struggling readers in second, third, and fifth grades. The study was conducted to explore how teachers, reading/ library media specialists, and students utilize a variety of non-fiction folktales in their classrooms and the library media center. From this topic the following research questions were devised.

The researcher discovered the challenges that teachers are faced with the implementation of folktales, how is folktales aligned with the (CCSS) Common Core State Standards, what role do heroes play in folktales, and what traits and/or characteristics would students prefer their hero to have. This qualitative study was conducted due to a curriculum change on the local, state, and national levels. Implications of these findings through process and product are discussed in this study.

The results of this study indicate that the Common Core State Standards curriculum guide need to be revised and the selection of folktale stories in the curriculum need to be increased in the library and the classrooms in order for education to improve.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

In today's world it is important that students learn about cultural diversity, cultural differences, and self-identity. How one is perceived by others is important, because people get the wrong perception of a person, even if they know little about that individual.

Teaching children to read and develop their comprehension skills is a critical attribute in our schools today. Biemiller (1999) argues "to succeed at reading, a child must be able to identify or "read" printed words and to understand the story or text composed of those words (1)." Teachers are being held accountable through tough evaluation standards for the achievement of all their students. With achievement comes high stake testing, high scores, and prior knowledge of persons, places and things that students must know for lifelong learning.

Over the years various studies have been written as to what multicultural education is? As individuals, we perceive multicultural education to have various meanings and is interpreted by individuals from different cultures differently. Bennett (2003) argues that "multicultural education in the United States is an approach to teaching that is based upon democratic values and beliefs and that affirms cultural pluralism within culturally diverse societies in an interdependent world (p. 14)."

We live in a multicultural society and through the eyes of others' life is perceived the way that individual wants to perceive it through their own values, morals, and religious beliefs. Diller (2007) argues that "cultural diversity refers to the array of differences among groups of people with definable and unique cultural backgrounds (p. 4)." When people from different cultures come together to live, eat, and socialize with other cultures, we must as United States citizens accept and understand why we belong to a certain ethnic group.

Diller (2007) contends that "ethnic group is any distinguishable people whose members share a common culture and see themselves as separate and different from the majority culture.

The observable differences-whether physical, racial, cultural, or geographic- frequently serve as a basic for unequal treatment within a larger society (p. 4).”

Kindersley (2003) listed several things that make an ethnic group. “People belong to ethnic groups, because they often have things in common such as a shared race, language, culture, and religion. Religion often creates a sense of cultural distinctiveness. Ethnic groups can be large or small, and these days they can live together or can be spread all over the world (p. 10).”

Children are constantly wondering in their classrooms why these students look, speak, and dress differently. Exposure to different cultures gives one the opportunity to learn about various cultures that they would not normally know about. For example, students being in the same culture from elementary, middle, and high school may not have the necessary social skills needed to prepare them for the real world even, if they attend college.

The majority of children that attends college have a cultural shock, because they are not equipped with the necessary social skills that would have prepared them to foster intellectual and other skills needed for life outside of their culture. Bennett (2003) states that multicultural education consists of four interactive dimensions:

1. The movement toward equity, or equity pedagogy;
2. Curriculum reform, or rethinking the curriculum through multiple perspectives;
3. Multicultural competences, the process of becoming conscious of your own as well as other cultural perspectives as a foundation for informed cross-cultural interactions;
4. Teaching toward social justice, the commitment to combat prejudice and discrimination of all kinds, especially racism, sexism, and classism (p.14).

Respecting one for who they are is a life lesson for all to know and learn. We must respect each other’s beliefs, values, and moral issues. Many cultures believe that they must give up their culture in order to be respected and accepted by the society they live in. Society must not put a

label on one's culture, because they are different. We must be able to learn from each other in order to grow and make this world a better place to live in. Diller (2007) defines culture as "combining traditional ideas and related values, and it is the product of actions; it is learned, shared, and transmitted from one generation to the next; and it organizes life and helps interpret existence (p. 62)."

Teaching children about multicultural education is important, because children are able to navigate themselves through the pluralistic society. Learning about multicultural education is essential, because children can receive the survival tools needed in order to compete in the world. This competition begins when children can interact with society, be aware, and become an active member in the global community they live in. When children are exposed to multicultural education, it opens up a new beginning in their lives. A beginning of possibilities of discovering the world through the eyes and minds of different cultures. In doing so, teachers can develop multicultural education curriculum units that supports the need to learn about various cultures. It is our vision as teachers, to have a multicultural society where children can develop a positive attitude about each other and their own culture.

Last year, Louisiana adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for implementation in 2013-2014. Common Core State Standards (2013) states that in "kindergarten through fifth grades students should understand and be able to read closely the text to determine what the text says explicitly, make logical inferences from it, determine central ideas or themes of a text, analyze their development, summarize the key supporting details and ideas, read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently, and specifically students are to analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text (p. 10)."

This new adoption has gained some support especially in the area of multicultural literature, but there is one concern. The concern is whether or not the library and/or classrooms collection will support the new curriculum standards. The library and classrooms should provide materials to support the diversity of its users.

In order for children to understand the world around them, teachers must provide their students with multicultural literature that will enhance their cultural perspectives of each other. We as teachers must instill in the lives of children that America is a place of freedom and prosperity. By doing this, teachers are able to focus the curriculum on children understanding of each other and the global world they live in. Hoobler (2003) makes an excellent point when he referred to this folklore legend told by the Paiute people of the Great Plains as he describes their dangerous journey. It is as follows:

Ice had formed ahead of them, and it reached all the way to the sky. The people could not cross it....A Raven flew up and struck the ice and cracked it. Coyote said, "These small people can't get across the ice." Another Raven flew up again and cracked the ice again. Coyote said, 'Try again, try again,' Raven flew up again and broke the ice. The people ran across (p. 9).

If a child is a struggling reader, we must do as the Raven and Coyote did. We must try again and again until that child is able to read. Teachers must help remove barriers in the classrooms. The best way to do this is to have an open mind to understanding cultural diversity. America offers one to practice their faith, write, and speak their language as they please. Teachers across all content areas must be able to incorporate nonfiction literature and literacy strategies daily in their classrooms. A good daily dose of literature from diverse cultures in the classrooms will prepare students for a multicultural society.

Problem Statement

Norton (2013) defines multicultural literature "as helping readers identify cultural heritage, understanding sociological changes, respecting the value of minority groups, raising aspiration,

and expanding imagination and creativity (p. 2).” When students can understand those key points as Norton described them, students will have a better understanding that they must respect each other’s opinions. When this occurs, students’ attitudes toward other cultures will improve.

This qualitative case study will focus on lived experiences of students, teachers, and the researcher. This intact group of participants will be observed and studied for three weeks. Observation data will be collected from participants. The researcher’s goal is to explore how reading non-fiction African-American folktales to struggling readers in second, third, and fifth graders in north Louisiana will affect their comprehension skills, and attitude toward other cultures other than their own.

Non-fiction multicultural literature books as Norton (2013) suggests “encourages students of all ages to become what, March Aronson calls detectives (p. 6).” The Department of Education in Louisiana Believes website (2013) states “literacy has traditionally played an important role in social studies, the Common Core State Standards present a new paradigm for how it should be integrated into social studies instruction; the description task reflects the rigor of Common Core and applies standards for reading informational text and writing to a social studies content (p. 3).”

Background History of Bayou School

The school that will be studied is called “Bayou School” located in a small African American community in north Louisiana, where United States Air Force personnel once lived. When visitors come to the area, they will see beautiful art work, rivers, bayous, and farmland. Driving from either south, east, west, or north, Bayou School is centrally located and it borders Texas, Arkansas, and Mississippi state lines. The area is called “twin city community”, because it borders another community divided by a river.

Bayou school is medium size with an enrollment of 350 students and is rich in its beliefs, values, pride, and traditions. As of the 2013-14 school year, the student population is four hundred and fifty-five students ranging from Pre-k through fifth grade. Since the 1970's, the school population has increased, decreased, and increased again.

The school was originally built in 1959 on 8.5 acres of land with a building size of 40,142 square feet. The school capacity is 660 students. There are 16 classrooms. On the Louisiana statewide performance test scoreboard the school scores from 2007 to 2011 dropped from 73.1% to 69.6%. During the 2012-13 school year, the school test scores dropped again to 67.8 % and received a letter grade of a D.

In 2013, Bayou School iLEAP Criterion-Referenced test scores showed 7% of 3rd grade students performed at the Advanced level, 16% at the Mastery Level, 34% at the Basic level, 27% at the Approaching Basic level, and 16 % at the Unsatisfactory level in reading and language arts. The school average test scores were in the fifty percentile.

From 2004 to 2009 the enrollment at the school was at its lowest peak of 350. In 2010 the school hit its highest peak of 500 students then dropped below 500 in 2011. The school's free and reduced lunch program was roughly 100% from 2004 to 2011. The student-teacher ratio is 1 to 20, while full-time teachers' ratio is at an average of 30.

The school's mission is to "function as a team to improve student achievement by requiring high expectations for all stakeholders and create a community of lifelong learners. The school has a motto that all children can learn no matter what community they live in, with the integration of sound instructional strategies and weekly job embedded professional developments all students will succeed (Bayou, 2012)." The school has a dedicated staff and" has made a commitment along with the students that each child will develop to their fullest potential. The school believes that

they can reach their goals with the “development and enhancement of human capital (Bayou, 2012).”

During the 2004-2005 school year, the school made another commitment to “raise the level of expectation to all stakeholders to ensure that ‘No Child Will Be Left Behind,’ to exceed expectations, to continue to teach, lead, and prepare students for a brighter tomorrow (Bayou, 2005, p. 2).” The Bayou student body, teachers, administrators, and stakeholders are working hard to reach their goal.

Bayou school is one out of twelve schools recognized as being a top gained school for the 2011-2012 academic year for an increase in LEAP and ILEAP test scores. The school received a stipend of \$5,000.00 from the Louisiana Department of Education.

Purpose of the Study

Curriculum changes, adoption of the new Common Core English-Language Arts standards, the need for the library collection to be in alignment, and support the curricular needs of the school have been a struggle for administrators, reading and social studies teachers, reading specialists, and library media specialists. Because of the amount of books and other materials that circulate out of the media center into the classrooms, reading teachers and library specialists are being asked to develop their classrooms and library collection in support of the curriculum without truly understanding what the users need.

It is essential for teachers, media center specialists, and administrators to be aware of curriculum changes and the needs of its users in order to provide the necessary services that are needed. The purpose of this study is to explore how three elementary teachers, one reading/library media specialist along with eight African American students in grades second, third, and fifth grades utilize a variety of nonfiction African American folktales in their classrooms and the library.

Grolier (1994) found that “over century’s people across the world have developed their own ideas about how to communicate and what the world means to them? These beliefs and values form part of the culture of a people (p. 26).” Cultures are formed by a community of people. A diverse collection of literature books will be used to teach students about various groups of people live, their religious beliefs, their values, and to show respect for each other.

The following research questions will be explored in this study. They are as follows:

Students:

- Why do students think folktales have heroes?
- What are some traits and/or characteristics that students would like for their hero to have?

Teachers:

- How are elementary teachers implementing the use of folktales in the classrooms?
- What challenges do elementary teachers face with the implementation of folktales?
- What are elementary teachers’ and/or students’ perception of folktales?
- How do elementary teachers align their teaching of folktales to the Common Core standards?

The findings of this study will serve as a model in supporting the school’s curriculum and mission statement.

Importance of the Study

Creswell (2009) argues that qualitative research is a “means for exploring and understanding the meaning of individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. The process of research involves emerging questions and procedures; collecting data in the participants’ setting; analyzing the data inductively, building particulars to general themes; and making interpretations of the meaning of the data. The final written report has a flexible writing structure (p. 232).”

This qualitative case study is important, because children of all ages as well as adults must understand the importance of valuing each other's culture, beliefs, religious faith, education, community tradition, language, art, political ideas, and learning styles. Children and adults can share their personal experiences of their cultural as well as the researcher in an appreciation of learning about each other's life styles.

In order for others to learn about cultural diversity, they must be able to associate their life experiences with other cultures and be able to put those accounts into perspectives for lifelong learning. Children often struggle with identifying who they are in society. When children are able to identify who they are, they are able to preserve their heritage and their cultural traditions and values.

Creswell (2009) noted that case studies "are a qualitative strategy in which the researcher explores in depth a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals. The case (s) are bounded by time and activity, and researchers collect detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time (p. 227)."

Learning about multicultural education through literature will give students the opportunity to explore their cultural past and discover what the future might hold for them. Multicultural education teaches pluralism and pluralism teaches diversity. For example, a person who has lived all of her life in a certain culture will have more knowledge about that particular culture than one that has just been introduced to that culture.

The review of literature section will further reveal why it is important for children to learn about multicultural education and literature. It is the desire of the researcher that students will learn about their own culture by reading African American folktales.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

As the researcher begins her review of literature for this study, it is most appropriate to discuss how multicultural education began and how important multicultural education is. Bennett (2003) states that in the 1960's, "multicultural education scholars and advocates have been idealistic and hopeful for educational reform that can make a difference in our society and world (xi)." In order to make a difference in the world, we all must put forth efforts in understanding and appreciating our world cultures. We must all develop a feeling to inquire. Inquire into who we are and why we are here. Multicultural education is a critical issue in our schools today. We must address those issues now, if we want to make a difference.

According to Gay (1994) multicultural education began around 1988. Gay (1994) states that "most research and scholarship have devoted to defining the conceptual parameters of the field, documenting cultural characteristics, and developing sample curricula and instructional strategies for classroom practice (p.18)." Most of the research on multicultural education during this era dealt with anecdotal stories that researcher shared with others and autobiographical information.

Studies done in the 1990's as stated by Gay (1994) revealed the "effects of modifying teaching styles to match cultural characteristics and learning styles of different ethnic groups (p.19)." One example that was provided was the Kamehameha Early Education Program (KEEP). This was a language arts program conducted with Hawaiian students.

The study's findings indicated that Hawaiian students' social and academic skills increased from the "13th to the 67th percentile in four years when they demonstrated their learning style in the classroom in regard to interpersonal, communication, and learning styles. This site modified its teaching by having their students interact with other people, perform, assist, and cooperate when needed.

In another study with African American students, Gay (1994) argues that students' engagement in instructional activities and academic achievement improved because of the following:

- “Different and frequently varied formats are used to present learning tasks
- Activities and physical participation are routine elements of learning
- Features of their communication styles are incorporated into the teaching process
- African American content is a part of the curriculum and;
- Instructional materials and activities have high interest appeal (p.19).”

In another study cited by Gay (1994) involved Native Americans in the United States and Canada. This study revealed “that when teachers adapt their instructional classroom interactional styles to approximate more closely those of the students, participation results are positive (p. 20).” Teachers must be able to meet the needs of all their learners. They must be flexible in their planning to incorporate all learning styles of their students. When students respond it is an indication that they understand the lesson. Students can develop a sense of prior knowledge.

To know is to have knowledge of certain things. Students have the opportunity while intermingling with other children from different cultures to learn about cultural diversity, and why their culture is different from theirs. Through carefully planning multicultural education lessons, teachers are able to help their learners to appreciate others for who they are not what they can do for them. Students can easily develop human dignity through respecting other cultures. Having respect for others is something that no one can take away. It is the American way of doing things.

In getting children to understand multicultural education, it must start with teachers. Teachers are our vehicle in helping children to understand this global society. Teachers have the education and competence needed to make a difference in a child's life. Students develop at an early age learning how to become critical thinkers and to have compassion for others. When children are able to view people from different perspectives, they are able to understand the cultural complexity

of life. Teachers are born leaders. Leaders have the strength to guide children in the right direction to learn about being fair.

Kendall (1983) argues that we as teachers must “prepare children to enter into diverse intergroup relations, as well as with giving children the skills and knowledge needed to function in an increasingly changing world (p. 62).” Teachers are in the position to make a difference with the children they teach. Teachers must teach children to accept who they are, have a good attitude toward life, and respect other’s cultural heritage. When students are taught to learn about their culture as well as the other cultures, they are able to readily deal with other socially. A teacher, teaching multicultural education will know that to teach others about another culture is an unforgettable experience.

Kendall (1983) contends that it is crucial that teachers “provide a hypothetical multicultural environment through thoughtful selection of curriculum materials and learning activities that reflect a multicultural society (p. 63).” When a multicultural environment is taught to children, children are able to prepare themselves for a diverse society. A careful planned curriculum should exclude any materials that might impose a problem, such as cultural stereotype or ethnocentricity.

Baptiste (1979) argues that stereotype is “a standard mental picture that is held in common by many members of one group about another-and that represents an oversimplified opinion, affective attitude, or uncritical judgment. It is a preconceived or pre-judged idea about a group of people with diverse membership (p. 81).” For example, people are criticized for belonging to a certain ethnic group.

Baptiste (1979) defines ethnic group as “a group of people with a common heritage, such as a geographical heritage, which can be distinguished due to cultural and sociological traits. All groups have both a racial identification and an ethnic identification. For example, Black Americans or African Americans are members of the Negroid race with African ethnicity (p. 80).” Thus,

factors such as, one's religion and language is considered belonging to a certain ethnic group. African Americans are identified by their physical features as well as other ethnicities.

Baptiste (1979) states that ethnicity "is the awareness of the uniqueness of one's ethnic identity by the individual members of the group. Such awareness also reflects itself in the pride which one takes in his-her ethnic identity. It also involves the potency of the identity expressed by members of that group, and these expressions are transmitted through the culture (p. 81)."

Bell (2007) argues that ethnicity on the other hand, is like gender, "race is socially constructed to denote boundaries between the powerful and less powerful," and is often defined by the more powerful, dominant group (p. 6)." As teachers we set boundaries to go above and beyond. Educating children to become aware of a diverse culture is a lesson that will never be forgotten.

Kendall (1983) confirms that teachers must "design a curriculum that is inclusive rather than exclusive (p. 64)." If teachers can adhere to this practice, children will be better prepared to handle societal changes, share their own cultural experiences; which in turn will be a rewarding experience. Hooks (2006) once said "everyone who remembers his own educational experience remembers teachers, not methods and techniques. The teacher is the kingpin of the educational situation. He makes and breaks programs (p. 15)." A teacher must teach her students to be cultural diverse.

Lynch (1989) argues that "cultural diversity is used to describe the presence within one geographical area of a number of different cultural, linguistic, creedal, ethnic or racial groups; in short cultural diversity is global phenomenon, it is also one of great longevity; it has existed for a very long time; it is a fact of life in countries of East and West, and North and South, but as Lynch confirmed that "during the period after the Second World War that the coincidence of five major factors transformed the way that educators and policymakers perceived cultural diversity The major factors are as follows:

- The economic expansion of western societies at the end of the war created a demand for a large additional labor force, and was brought together by mass migration. Consequently, social policies were proposed to cope with the greater cultural diversity.
- Improved communications and international transportation systems.
- Growing concern for human rights, as a result of the atrocities of the war, and the establishment of new international organizations dedicated to peace, conflict resolution and human rights.
- The resultant ethnic revitalization movements responded to the disparity between the declared values and those operative in society.
- Major new independent nations emerged, with in-built safeguards to take account of cultural diversity, for example Lebanon, India, etc. (p.5).

Lynch (1989) compares and contrasted cultural diversity and cultural pluralism. Lynch argues that “cultural pluralism indicates the policy of attempting to respond to that diversity. In contrast, he states that cultural diversity is factual, a descriptive term for the phenomenon of many cultures co-existing and interacting with the same spatial area, whether district, village, town, nation, region or globally (p. 5).”

People are afraid to respond to diversity, because most people feel that they do not know enough about cultural diversity and are petrified to accept other’s cultural ideas. Educating people about diversity is the key to understanding other’s point of view. We must not let culture divide us, but bring us together as one group of people living and working together in harmony and friendship.

In Lynch (1986) text he states that “multicultural education is necessary for all children in all schools, state and private, denominational and non-denominational, co-educational and single sex, primary and secondary, comprehensive and differentiated, compulsory and non-compulsory; teachers task in a multicultural society is to enable all pupils to achieve a higher-stage of cultural competence and sensitivity than that all which they entered the school so that cultural and social interaction can take place and recognition of the positive value of cultural diversity may grow (p.

15).” In order for others to see growth, they must be part of that growth before success and lifelong learning can take place. Success does not come by itself, success is achieved as a whole.

Lynch (1989) further states that it is “imperative that a good cultural diversity and cultural pluralism curriculum is developed. He further defines curriculum as meaning the “sum of the normal building blocks of curriculum development as planned by the school, its knowledge components (information, skills, values and attitudes), and the complementary learning experiences planned by the school (p. 34).”

A child’s learning experiences of cultural diversity must take place at school and home. The school is able to plan a curriculum that will educate children about the life of certain people at a particular given time. Parents at home can give their child the support and guidance needed to carry out their understanding of a diverse culture and its meaning. Boards of education should develop a well-balanced curriculum that will enhance a multicultural program globally.

As there are many interpretation from various authors of what multicultural education is, all authors have concluded that it is important for children to know and understand other cultural groups in society. Most cultural groups have focused themselves for certain powers and rewards. As children learn to respect each other, avoid conflicts, value each other’s property, and appreciate their cultural groups; the researcher finds it necessary to integrate non-fiction multicultural literature in this study with struggling second, third and fifth grade students.

For the purpose of this study, the researcher will define some terms so that readers are able to understand why this study is important. Non-fiction is defined as learning about real people, places and things. According to Common Core curriculum students are asked to have prior knowledge of certain subjects. Educators have struggled over years on how to teach struggling readers to read. Struggling readers often have difficulties in recognizing simple words from the Fry’s model of the one hundred basic words. These struggling readers have be assessed as reading at least two grade

levels below their peers. Majority of these students have been labeled and placed in special programs such as; special education in order to receive special instruction on how to become fluent readers.

Elected officials have even gone further as to name some schools as Title 1 schools, which includes Reading Recovery program. These schools are allotted certain amount of money to purchase educational materials and tools to reach these struggling readers. Struggling readers received daily classroom assessments from their teachers and reading specialists in order to provide the children with the necessary assistance that they need. Teachers are finding assessment strategies to instruct struggling readers through individualized lesson plans.

Children need constant support from their teachers. Marling and Paugh (2004) argue that the key to support is “careful, routine assessment that seeks to identify what struggling readers already know about language and literacy as the foundation on which reading instruction will build (p.vi).” Teachers are trained through professional developments to evaluate the strength and weakness of their students. Through daily assessments they are able to determine just how much is needed to prepare struggling readers for high-stake testing.

High-Stakes Testing

One of the goals of all school boards is to improve the reading abilities of their students. Students are administered high-stake testing throughout the school year. High-stake testing measures students’ knowledge of standards according to their grade level. Education reforms effort such as, *A Nation at Risk* (1983), reported that students were not performing in schools. In another report the *No Child Left Behind Act* (2001), *focused* on improving the reading instruction of students. Tompkins (2010) argues that *No Child Left Behind Act* was to “narrow the racial and ethnic gaps in achievement, reinforced the call for annual standardized testing (p. 95).”

Tompkins (2010) states that “high-stakes testing is different than classroom assessment. The scores provide little information for making-to-day instructional decisions, but students, teachers, administrators, and school are judged and held accountable by the results. Tompkins argues that the scores are used to make important educational decisions for students to determine school placement and high school graduation (p. 95).” High-stakes testing influences evaluation and salaries of teachers and administrators. Sanctions are placed on administrators and teachers, if students and schools are underperforming.

High-stakes testing are comprehensive standardized tests that have multiple-choice test items and other items which requires students to write a response through open-ended questions. The following are some components of high-stake subtests:

- Comprehension
- Vocabulary
- Writing mechanics
- Spelling

The following are some high-stakes testing that are administered in Louisiana. They are as follows, Tompkins (2010):

- “Iowa test of Basic Skills (ITBS)- The purpose of ITBS is to provide information to improve instruction in grades K-8. The components of ITBS are:
 - Phonics
 - Vocabulary
 - Comprehension
 - Oral Language

- Mechanics
- Spelling

A special feature of ITBS is that it is the oldest statewide assessment program and can be administered at the beginning of the school year to better inform instruction.

- Stanford Achievement Test (SAT)- The purpose of SAT is to measure K-8 students' progress toward meeting the challenges set forth by *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB) and state standards. The components of SAT are:
 - Phonemic awareness
 - Phonics
 - Vocabulary
 - Comprehension
 - Mechanics
 - Writing
 - Spelling

SAT provides a Lexile measure of students' reading levels.

- TerraNova Test (TNT) - TNT is a standardized test that uses both multiple-choice and constructed –response items that allow students to write responses. The components of TNT are:
 - Word analysis
 - Vocabulary
 - Comprehension
 - Mechanics
 - Spelling

Lexile scores are reported so teachers can match students to books. Also, one version of the TNT is available as an online test (p. 96).”

Tompkins (2010) listed the following components of “literacy development that students need to learn in order to become effective readers and writers.

- “Alphabetic code- Students learn phonemic awareness, phonics, and spelling to understand our sound-system.
- Fluency- Students learn to read fluently so that they have cognitive resources available for comprehension
- Vocabulary- Students acquire a wide vocabulary and learn how to unlock the meaning of new words.
- Comprehension- Students learn to use strategies to direct their comprehension (p. 103).”

As districts try to pull their test scores up, students are being pressured to perform their best. Students are beginning to feel that they are tested and stressed out with the amount of work that they are given daily. When students are given an abundance of work to do, most often they will not do their best. As for struggling readers, they are often missed.

Struggling Readers

Struggling readers become frustrated with little motivation to do their work. When this happens, those readers most often become disruptive students and their performance is in danger. Too often on a yearly average, educators will see a large number of students dropping out of school. Something must be done to prevent this situation from continuing to happen. Assessments must be done on students to identify their weaknesses and strength. Cheek and

Collins (1999) define assessment as the “procedures and methods used to evaluate the progress that a student makes in skill development (p. 411).” Tompkins (2010) suggests the following multiple-choice test-taking strategies for students that teachers can help with. Students must:

- “Read the entire question first
- Look for key words in the question
- Read all answer choices before choosing the correct one
- Answer easier questions first
- Make smart guesses
- Stick with your first answer
- Pace yourself
- Check your work carefully (p. 98).”

Hopefully, with utilizing the above strategies, children will have a better understanding that they are the ones that must make a difference in their lives for a better world to live in.

Tompkins (2010) argues that it is “crucial to identify students at risk for reading problems early, so these problems can be addressed quickly, before they are compounded. She identifies the following factors that predict early reading difficulties in children at an early age:

- Difficulty developing concepts about:
 - Print
 - Phonemic awareness
 - Letter names
 - Sound-symbol correspondences
- Slower response than classmates when asked to name letters and identify words
- Behavior that deviates from school norms

- Children with a family history of reading problems are more likely to experience difficulty in learning to read (p. 373).”

Some of the difficulties that struggling readers are faced with is that they have trouble with:

- Decoding skills
- Reading fluently
- Understanding the message of the text, because they lack the vocabulary knowledge needed to comprehend the message

Tompkins (2010) provides teachers and reading specialists with ways to address struggling readers’ problems. They are as follows:

- Concepts about print- The problem is that students does not understand the print concept.
 - The solution is to use the Language Experience Approach to record the student’s language and demonstrate concepts about the print.
 - Teachers can use share reading and have the student point out examples of print concepts in big books.
 - Teachers can have student dictate and write message.
- Alphabet knowledge- Students cannot name letters or match upper-and lowercase letters.
 - Teachers must examine alphabet books with the students
 - Teach students to use an alphabet chart to identify matching letters
 - Have students sort upper and lowercase letters
- Phonemic awareness-Students cannot manipulate speech sounds.
 - Have students match rhyming picture cards

- Pronounce individual sounds in a word and have students orally blend them into words
- Have students substitute beginning, medial, and ending sounds in words
- Decoding-

Students cannot identify high-frequency words.

- Make a personal word wall with words the student recognizes
- Use a routine to teach and practice high-frequency words
- Have students look for high-frequency words in familiar books

Students cannot identify consonant and vowel sounds

- Have students sort objects or picture cards according to sounds
- Have the student substitute initial consonants to create a list of words using a phonogram
- Do interactive writing with the student

Students cannot decode one-syllable words

- Teach students about vowel sounds
- Have students sort word cards according to vowel patterns
- Have the student read and write lists of words created from one phonogram

Students cannot identify multisyllabic words

- Have the students remove prefixes and suffixes to identify the root word
- Brainstorm lists of words from a single root word
- Do interactive writing with the student

- Fluency

Students omit, substitute, or repeat words when reading

- Teach high-frequency words that the student does not know
- Ensure that the level of reading materials is appropriate for the students
- Have the student use choral reading in small groups

Students will read word by word, with expression

- Have students to practice rereading easier texts to develop fluency
- Break text into phrases for students to read aloud
- Have students to do echo reading, imitating the teacher's expression
- Vocabulary- Students do not understand the meanings of words
 - Create a K-W-L chart or do an anticipation guide before reading
 - Teach key vocabulary before reading
 - Read books aloud every day to build the student's vocabulary
- Comprehension-

Students cannot retell or answer questions after reading

- Build the student's background knowledge before reading
- Ensure that the book is appropriate for the student
- Read the book aloud instead of having the student read it
- Have students retell a story

Students cannot draw inferences or do high-level thinking

- Teach comprehension strategies
- Teach students about text structure
- Use the Questioning the Author procedure

Students are passive readers

- Teach students to self-select books using the Goldilocks strategy
- Have students to read a book with a partner or in a literature circle
- Involve the students in hot seat, grand conversations, and other participatory activities

- Study Skills

Students cannot locate information in reference materials

- Teach students to use an index to locate information
- Have students practice in locating information in TV guides, dictionaries, almanacs, and other reference materials
- Teach students to skim and scan to find information in a text
- Teach students to navigate the Web to locate information online

Students cannot take notes

- Demonstrate how to take notes using a graphic organizer or small self-stick notes
- Have the students identify big ideas and create a graphic organizer to represent them
- Make a copy of a text and have students mark the big ideas with a highlighter pen (p. 374).”

Taylor and Yesseldyke (2007) contend that students struggle with reading, because of three main causes. They are:

1. “Internal student factors include any deficits, disorders, and dysfunctions that are innate or acquired such as, traumatic brain injuries.

2. Environmental factors that includes student experiences, family characteristics, and early education.
3. Instructional factors that involves the actual instruction a student receives (p. 6).”

Marling and Paugh (2004) state that “struggling readers’ progress by learning the skills and strategies more proficient readers use as they work to make sense of different kinds of texts (p.vi).”

The authors listed the following examples as to how struggling readers learn. They learn how to use:

- “Sound-symbol relationships
- Predictable grammatical structures and their knowledge of the world to make sense of texts
- Comprehension strategies like predicting, skimming, visualizing, and rereading
- Their personal experience, background knowledge, and other texts (p.vi).”

When incorporating different genres to reach struggling readers, each genre requires different strategies such as; realistic fiction, historical fiction, fantasy, biography, and nonfiction. As a teacher, librarian, and a reading specialist, the researcher has chosen to utilize the reading of nonfiction folktales to struggling readers. The focus of this paper is to use the following areas with students in order to prevent reading and learning difficulties in school. Students will use this experience as follows:

- Reading for pleasure
- Informational reading
- Experience literary reading
- Personal reading task performances and/or responses
- To learn social responsibility

Multicultural literature is a component of multicultural education. Dressel (2005) argues that “multicultural literature is often considered a powerful tool for helping students develop understanding, and respect for people of cultures different from their own as well as to gain an

appreciation of their own heritage (p. 750).” For struggling readers to learn about their culture, and other cultures is a lifelong learning reward.

Harris (1997) points out that “school achievement is tied to a sense of self-worth, multicultural literature can have a beneficial effect on the school achievement of children who have historically been denied realistic images of themselves and their families, community, and culture (p. 4).”

Harris (1997) confirms that it is important that multicultural literature be included in the classroom and the curriculum, she states that “multicultural literature is for all students (p. 3).” Harris continues to argue that “if our society is to meet the challenges of democratic pluralism, all students need to recognize the diversity that defines this society, learn to respect it, and see it in a positive light (p. 3).” Through the use of reading multicultural literature children will be exposed to many cultures through the reflection of their own. Multicultural literature provides children with the knowledge, skills and understanding of the world they live in.

The momentum to educate children about multicultural literature is a growing concern. At the same time, teachers are not being trained to aligned multicultural literature instruction in their classrooms. It is imperative that the state and the federal government adopt a multicultural curriculum, so that teachers can educate their students about the various cultures and the world that they will be entering. Students must be educating about our society as a whole and how it has changed.

Multicultural literature is used to motivate students to read, learn about other cultures, develop their comprehension skills, and develop a strong background for good literature. It has been long overdue that multicultural literature must be taught and taught now because of the diversity among our children today. How students learn and what they learn are very important to the researcher. Interpretation and comprehension is the key to a diverse classroom. As educators, we must

continue to stand strong and demand a multicultural curriculum with immediate implementation. Due to some limitations, the following culture will be part of this study and is explained as follows:

African- American Literature

World Book (2011) states that “Africa has a rich tradition of oral literature passed from one generation to the next. This oral literature includes:

- Histories of ethnic and kinship groups
- Legends of heroes, animal fables, proverbs, riddles, and songs in praise of chiefs and kings
- Religious ceremonies
- Record the past, to teach morals and traditions to young people, and to glorify political leaders (p. 116).”

World Book (2011) maintains that African American literature is literature written by “black Americans of African descent; its themes include the exploration of black identity, the condemnation of racism, and the celebration of the unique aspects of African American culture.

Bartolome de las Casas (1517), a Spanish missionary to the Caribbean island of Hispaniola, decided that his “country’s mistreatment of the Indian peoples of New Spain had become so bad that some way had to be found to protect them, his solution was to recommend that Africans be imported to the Spanish colonies to relieve the overworked Indians.” At this point “slave trade in the New World began, before the slave trade was abolished in the late 19th century, approximately ten million human beings had been brought to North and South America against their will, to be subjected to one of the most inhuman systems of social and economic oppression the world has ever seen .”

Meanwhile, Currie (2011) stated that it has been “Five hundred years since Africans were first brought to the New World in shackles, and over one hundred and forty years since slavery

was formally abolished in the United States; over fifty years have passed since the fallacy of ‘separate but equal’ was obliterated in the American courts, and some forty years since the watershed Civil Rights Act of 1964 guaranteed the rights and liberties of all Americans, especially those of color (p. 4).”

Currie (2011) contends that “African American literature has become so diverse, that Black writers of the present day have a variety of styles, forms, and genres at their disposal, which gives them the opportunity to utilize all of them (p. 83).” Over the years readers have complained how authors have stereotype various cultures in their books. Diller (2007) defines stereotype as “an undifferentiated, simplistic attribution that involves a judgment of habits, traits, abilities, or expectations...assigned as a characteristic of all members of a group (p. 35).”

Norton (2013) argues that in the 1970s and 1980s issues related to African American stereotypes and images found in African American children’s literature were as follows.

- “Not physically attractive
- Musical
- Combined religious fervor with superstitious beliefs
- Required to select life goals that benefited African American people
- Depending on others for whatever good things they could hope to acquire (p. 16).”

For the purpose of this study, the researcher will undertake one aspect of multicultural literature folklore. World Book (2009) defines folklore as “any beliefs, customs, and traditions practiced by and passed among a group of people who share some connections. Such a group, called a *folk*, may consist of people of a certain ethnicity, people who live in a certain region, an extended family, or even a small group of friends. People often think of folklore as old stories and songs (p. 323).”

Sharing religious beliefs, values and other ideas about cultures are great ways to gain knowledge about different folklore. Folklore is made up of myths, legends, folk songs, superstitions, customs, holidays, and folktales. The researcher has selected to study African-American folktale fables. World Book (2009) defines folktales as “fictional stories about animals

or human beings. Most of these tales are not set in any particular time or place, and they begin and end in a certain way (p. 323).” For example, many African-American folktales begin with phrase “Once upon a time” and end with “They lived happily ever after.”

Fables are make-believe moral stories that teach a lesson. World Book (2009) argues that in most fables “one or more of the characters is an animal, plant, or thing that talks and acts like a person. A fable may be told in prose or in verse. In many fables, the moral is told at the end in the form of a proverb (p. 3).”

In the famous fable of “*Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People’s Ears*” (Aardema, 1975) the African tale of misadventure begins when Mosquito whispers a lie into Iguana’s ears. The moral of the fable is revealed and the chain of events that follow result in an Animal Council meeting where the truth is discovered. Folktales are very popular with children, because the animal characters teach children how to care, have good manners, show feelings, and respect for others.

In the trickster folktale of *Anansi the Spider* (McDermott, 1972), the tricksters are animals who takes on the human characteristics. The African folktales characters most often include the tortoise, the hare, and of course Anansi. Many literary writers have been inspired to write by incorporating folktales in their work. Writers such as, Geoffrey Chaucer in his *Canterbury Tales*. *The Canterbury Tales* “are written in verse, although some are in prose are presented as part of a story-telling contest by a group of pilgrims as they travel together on a journey from Southwark to the shrine of Saint Thomas Becket at Canterbury Cathedral (Wikipedia, p. 1).”

The researcher found folktales to be important, because they are easy to tell and remember. In the November issue of *Global Kids Oz* (2011) it states that folktales “doesn’t have an individual author; instead it is owned by the entire culture of the community (p. 2).” Old stories can be retold over and over and children will sit to listen to them. When stories are retold, most often people will put another twist to the story. This is the one most enjoyable parts of folktales.

As teachers, we must continue to develop strategies that will encourage children to read and develop their comprehension skills. As teachers, we can help build excitement in a child's life. It is important for teachers, such as; myself to be aware that any source and/or resources that we have available, we must utilize them to enhance the learning of all children in order to survive in a diverse culture.

Green (1967) argues that folktales are "stories that were told long before the invention of printing; they were passed on by word of mouth: fathers told children, neighbor shared with neighbor, innkeepers told their guests, and merchants told sea captains, who carried them to the far corners of the world (p. 7)." Folk literature provides students to opportunity to adventure into an imaginable world filled with animal characters.

Green (1967) states that if a "story is repeated enough times by enough people, it may be on the way to becoming a folktale; whenever folktale are told, the stories do not change very much in the retelling. For example, stated Green; Brer Rabbit is a literary cousin of Wakaima and they are thousands of miles away from each other (p. 7)."

Hamilton (1995) argues that "close relationship between humans and animals is an important subject in African American folktales (p. x)." Children at an early age find it easier to relate to animal stories instead of human stories. Lester (1969) argues that "folktales are stories that give people a way of communicating with each other about other-their fears, their hopes, their dreams, their fantasies, giving their explanations of why the world is the way it is; it is in stories like these that a child learns who his parents are and who he will become (p. vii)."

Reading folktales to children will teach them a lesson of acceptance, and to respect others' differences. Duvall (1994) argues that "respecting each other differences can help one to deal with disagreements, power struggles, frustration, resentment, and insecurity (p. 4)." Folktales also teach children how to be tolerant of others. Duvall (1994) maintains that "to get along with all kinds of

people takes tolerance-the capacity to recognize and respect the beliefs and practices of others, even when they are not exactly like you (p. 4).”

It is our responsibility as teachers to teach these life skills to our children, because these are skills that will last a life time. It is a gift that teachers give to students and it will always give back one way or another way. As adults we face day to day challenges and conflicts; same as students. We must learn that challenges and conflicts are a part of being human, regardless of our religious beliefs, values, and moral issues.

Mason (2002) argues that “over long periods of time people have developed their own clear ideas about how best to live in their lands-not just what to grow and eat but also what clothes to wear, what type of houses to build, and what games to enjoy; in other words, people have evolved their own cultures (p. 8).” This means that these people have developed their own way of living, religion and language etc.

Duvall (1994) suggests the following ways for one to communicate with others effectively in order to understand their world around them.

- “Get to know someone who is not like you
- See if your new friend will invite you to share a cultural holiday such as, Kwanzaa
- Eat lunch with a new friend
- Look for common ground
- Ask new people you meet to do something with you
- Volunteer to read or visit with an older person in your neighborhood or in a nursing home (p. 144).”

Children can learn about different cultures by reading stories from those cultures. Lester (1969) argues that “there are many kinds of stories, stories that partly happened and are partly imagined but what you imagine can be as real and true as what happens in front of your eyes. There

are stories that make you feel good inside; stories that teach you how to get along in the world; stories that take your mind off your troubles (p. viii).” Whatever one imagines that imagination can carry them to many countries by looking through the eyes of others.

Lester (1969) contends that “each person who tells a story molds the story to his tongue and to his mouth, and each listener molds the story to his ear. Thus, the same story, told over and over, is never quite the same. But when stories are written in books, people think that this is the only way the story should be and that it cannot be changed. And that is the way a story as a living, growing, changing thing dies. Stories can be changed and should be, as the story teller feels. Stories don’t live otherwise (p. viii).” In order for stories to survive, we must continue to reach children through reading folktales or some type of folklore. Stories must travel through people in order to have a meaning.

The literature reviewed for this study suggest that the classrooms and library collection must be evaluated regularly and aligned with Common Core Standards in order for it to support the curricula of the school. The media center and the classrooms concur with *ALA’s Bill of Rights* policy, which “states that books and other resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation (1980).”

Schwandt (2007) argues that “method or research methods refers to the set of investigative procedures used with a particular field of study or discipline and that the term encompasses a number of different connotations that are relevant to the practice of qualitative inquiry and that it is as follows:

“ A procedure, tool, or techniques used by the inquirer to generate and analyze data. Three classes or types of tools are used to generate qualitative data: interviewing (listening, talking, conversing, recording), observation (watching, videotaping), and document analysis

(reading, photographing) (p. 191).”

By utilizing non-fiction multicultural literature in the classrooms and the library, teachers and library media specialists can develop their lesson plans to indicate that cultural diversity is not an object and is not learned, but it is inferred by cultural identity through knowledge, ideas, skills, love, and having an appreciation for each other through cultural awareness. Being different does not mean that we have to dislike others, judge them, disapprove their way of life, but show them that we respect them for who they are. This study will cover several subgroups of African American folktales. Beaty (1997) states that most cultures can be divided into subgroups that may/or may not be different from one another. The following are several African folktales subgroups that will be highlighted in this study:

- Ashanti

A member of a people of southern Ghana and the dialect of Akan spoken by the Ashanti people. Former British protectorate West Africa and is now part of Ghana (Merriam-Webster 2014).

- Benin

Benin’s boundaries are north by Niger, east by Nigeria and south by the Atlantic Ocean. The size is 43,500 square miles with a population is 6.3 million people. The official language is French with a 70% local religion, 15 % Islam, and 15% Christianity (Offodile, 2001, p. 29).

- Cameroon

Cameroon is bordered east by Central African Republic, southwest by the Atlantic Ocean, and west by Nigeria. The size is 183,569 square miles with a population of 15.5 million people. Their official language is English and French with a 51% local religions, 33% Christianity (mostly in the south), and 16% Islam in the north (Offodile, 2001, p. 41).

- Masai

A member of a pastoral and hunting people of Kenya and Tanzania and the Nilotic language of the Masai people. They speak a language called Maa (of the Nilo-Saharan family (Merriam-Webster 2014).

- Nigeria

Nigeria is bordered to the north by Niger, east by Cameroon, south by the Atlantic Ocean, and west by Benin. The official language is English and language of instruction in educational institutions. There are: 50% Islam, 40% Christianity, and 10% local religion (Offodile, 2001, p. 141).

Research Questions

For the purpose of this study, the researcher will examine the following five research questions in the methods section of her case study research:

1. How are elementary teachers implementing multicultural literature in the classrooms?
2. What challenges do elementary teachers face with the implementation of folktales?
3. How do elementary teachers align the teaching of folktales to the Common Core Standards?
4. Why do students think folktales have heroes?
5. What are some traits and/or characteristics that students would like for their hero to have?

CHAPTER 3: METHODS

Process

Schwandt (2007) defines methods as a “set of investigative procedures used within a particular field of study or discipline (p. 191).” The procedures that the researcher used in this social study to generate and analyze the data encompassed the following methods advocated by Schwandt. The researcher used the following tools to generate data from this qualitative study. The tools that were used are as follows:

- Interviewing- The researcher and subjects have listened, talked, and recorded.
- Observation- The researcher and subjects have observed, videotaped and recorded.
- Document Analysis- The researcher and subjects have read and photographed.

The word subjects and/or participants were interchanged to “refer to the person or persons being studied. According to Schwandt (2007), it is the research subject or the object of investigation (p. 279).” This qualitative case study on African- American Folktale research was conducted to discover, if the library media center social science collection supports the school’s curriculum, teachers’, and students’ perceptions of multicultural literature. Schwandt (2007) argues that case study research is:

“A strategy for doing social inquiry, it is a way of thinking in terms of the distinction between case study and variable study. In case study, the case itself is at center stage, not variables. Robert Yin argues that a case study strategy is preferred when the inquirer seeks answers to how or why questions, when the inquirer has little control over events being studied, when the object of study is a contemporary phenomenon in a real-life context, when boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not clear, and when it is desirable to use multiple sources of evidence. Robert Stake emphasizes that the foremost concern of case study research is to generate knowledge of the particular. He favors case studies that aim to discern and pursue understanding of issues intrinsic to the case itself. However, he acknowledges that cases can be chosen and studied because they are thought to be instrumentally useful in furthering understanding of a particular problem, issue, concept, and so on (p. 28).”

Children's folktale books play an important role in educating children about African American literature. Sharing folktales with children provides children with the opportunity to vision the qualities and traits that are in the folktale characters. Most importantly, these folktale characters are clever and brave. These are some of the traits that a child would want to grow up to have.

Children do not relate to characters in stories when the characters are dishonest and weak. Folktale characters are heroes in the eyes of children. Hero characters are known to solve problems. Alexander (2012) states that the following factors should be used in the selection of folktales. They are:

- “Dialogue and Dialect-The dialogue is what characters say to each other. The rest of the tale is told in the third person. This person is called the narrator. The narrator is outside of the story and is telling the tale (Appendix 25).
- Setting-The setting is where and when a story takes place. A few details about time and place set the scene. Our imaginations must fill in the rest of the setting. We do know that the story happened long ago (Appendix 24).
- Plot-There is a beginning, middle, and ending. Events, or what happens in the folktale, make up the plot. The plot of a folktale is generally shorter and simpler than in other kinds of stories. We quickly learn that there is an important problem to be solved. In some folktales, the main character must learn something about himself or herself. This problem or conflict tests the folktale hero (Appendix 26).

The action gets exciting, then it reaches the climax which is the most exciting part of the story, and at last the problem is solved. When the problem is solved, that is the resolution, or solution. Folktales often have happy endings.

- Theme- Is the story message or main ideas. Folktales may share common themes. For example, many tales teach that it is better to share than to be selfish (p. 10)” Appendix 22.

The researcher generated knowledge from teachers and students about folktales. The following were used when interviewing:

Folktales

- What are folktales?
- Why are folktales important to read?
- Why it is important to learn about other cultures?
- Why was folktales told?
- Who told folktales?
- Who are the heroes in folktales?
- Why do folktales have heroes?
- Why are tricksters used in folktales?

Alexander (2012) states that “folktales do not have a single author. They were told and retold by “folk,” or common people. A similar tale may appear in many different cultures. Names and places are changed, but the story is really the same (p. 4).” As people moved around their folktales moved with them and their stories were told over. Each time folktales were told, they had a different twist to make them more interesting.

The researcher inquired into a social phenomenon for answers to questions of how and why. Folks’ long time ago told folktales to answer their difficult questions. Telling and retelling stories helped people around the world solve their problems and to make sense of phenomenon. Allen (2005) defines phenomenon as an “event or fact, especially one that is remarkable (p. 485).” An “event or fact” of how heroes and/or tricksters came to be.

Alexander (2012) defines a hero as a “person or an animal. He or she accomplishes great deeds. The hero is often strong, intelligent, loyal, and determined. This character may have special powers. In folktales, we meet animals that can talk (p. 4).” Children can relate to heroes in stories, because they can vision heroes as protecting them from evil characters. Characters that will bring them harm.

Yolen (2003) states that the word hero “is a word for a winner, not whipper; for smarty; not smarty-pants; for holding on, not holding back. Hero is about being clever, learning from your mistakes, being kind and compassionate, and finding good friends. Picking up a sword does not make you a hero, but sticking to your word does (p. ix).” For example, heroes such as, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. who stated in his famous speech, “*I Have a Dream*, that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character (Childcraft, 2011, p. 36).” Dr. King preached against non-violence and unfairness. He felt that all people needed to be treated fairly, and learn to live together for a better world.

Another example of a hero is the late Rolihlahla Nelson Mandela. Mandela (2002) fought against minority rule with non-violence by organizing a campaign in the early 1950’s to end the pass system, which required black South Africans to carry passes wherever they traveled. He was arrested on charges of treason, but he was acquitted after a five-year trial. In 1962, he was arrested again and served twenty-seven years in prison, after which he was released in 1990.

While being arrested a second time, Mandela stated that, he had “cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die. In 1993, Mandela won the Nobel Peace Prize and in 1994 became the first black president of South Africa (p. i).” Mandela died of natural causes in

December of 2013. By having a cultural diverse society, we can learn from Dr. King, Nelson Mandela and others that we must stand strong and stick to our beliefs and values for a better educated society.

Another important character in folktales is the trickster. Alexander (2012) defines a “trickster as a clever and sly character who outsmarts everyone in the story. Tricksters may cause trouble for other characters. But often, they also solve problems or learn lessons. Alexander states that folktales share common ideas. The stories show what people believe about the world. In many ways, we are all alike. We want to be clever and brave. We want to solve problems. Folktales teach us all of these things (p. 4).”

Folktales are written as a mean of communicating with other people by teaching life lessons and entertaining. Most readers have a tendency to think that folktales are meaningless, but they are factual stories. They are stories that have been told to amuse readers. The following information was gathered for this study:

- Media center and school handbooks
- Social studies curriculum text
- Selection and collection policies
- Local and State Common Core Standards Guidelines
- The school’s handbook and the District’s website contained the curriculum policy, vision and mission statements
- The bibliography will be obtained from the library media center social science collection

In this study, the researcher searched for several African- American folktales that were read to students to enhance their reading abilities and comprehension skills of struggling readers.

Beaty (1997) argues that “we are each different from one another; from our fingerprints to our voices, from our toenails to our eyelashes, each of us is unique. She states that we are also alike.

We eat, sleep, work, play, we were all born as babies, we grow as children, and develop into mature human beings, the grand inheritors of Planet Earth (p. 3).”

We do not want a world where our children are afraid of being harmed and/or having people to disrespect them. Children need a world that will accept them for who they are. Beaty (1997) states that the “time has come to make a change, societies around the world are crying out for change. We know there must be a way for people to learn to appreciate one another.”

Beaty continues by saying that we need a “major shift in our thinking...a new people – perspective (p. 3).”

The researcher agrees with Beaty, that the best way to start teaching about diversity is to “focus on our likenesses and celebrate our differences; people who appreciate their common bonds come to celebrate their differences with pride.” This study helped students build their bond with other cultures. With the assistance of teachers and subjects, the bonding started with this study. The classroom teachers were involved in the selection of books. The books were selected based on the reading abilities of the participants. Participants interested in reading folktales and being read to, played an important role in this study.

The African-American folktales selected were aligned with the social studies series of Common Core State Standards. Although, the researcher and classroom teachers have selected the folktales from the social science collection, these books can be read to children across all content areas in order to correct reading difficulties with struggling readers.

The researcher’s assisted struggling readers with their abilities to become readers and have an awareness of their cultural heritage. Students became knowledgeable about the following:

- To appreciate and develop an understanding of African-American culture through reading folktales and being read too
- To develop their reading abilities and interests in folktales through literacy development

- To develop their listening skills
- To develop their comprehension skills
- To develop their understanding of language and reading through vocabulary development
- To develop their handwriting skills
- To become lifelong readers and learners

Research suggests a certain process that folktales be taught. The process that was used in this study are:

- Selection of African-American folktales
- Reading of one folktale to begin with
- Students were asked questions about the characters in the story and what character they liked best and why
- Researcher and teachers defined to students the word folktale and storyteller
- Students were asked to become storytellers by telling some type of tale that they have heard from their parents and/or grandparents etc.

Beatty (1997) argues that the following guidelines for choosing appropriate cultural books are as follows:

- “A balance of books showing different facets of each culture
- A balance of books showing past and present
- A balance of simple folktales and contemporary stories
- Books with detailed illustrations, not oversimplified stereotypes
- Books with language or dialect showing respect for the culture
- Books with characters that children can identify with
- Books with characters from different cultures in one story (p.24).”

The Study

The African-American folktales unit was studied twice a week for three weeks for a total of 6 lessons. The duration of the lessons were forty-five minutes. The instruction and time was twice a week. The books below were ranked and ordered by either paperbacks or hardback books upon availability. Each student were given a copy of the selected books. Participants were assigned to read their books and complete their activities according to the lesson plan.

Participants

The selection of participants were chosen based on the recommendation of their teachers. The selection was heterogeneous and gender balanced for this study. The teachers and reading/library media specialist selected two or three folktales from this collection to be included in the lessons along with the authors. For the purpose of anonymity, the participants (students) will be referred to by pseudonyms (P) for participate P1-2, P2-2, P3-3, P4-3, P5-5, P6-5, P7-5, and P8-5.

Participants' grades were identified as (2) for second graders, (3) for third graders, and (5) for fifth graders. Teachers were referred by pseudonyms (T) for teachers T1-2, T2-3, and T3-5. The grades that they teach were identified as (2) for second, (3) for third, and (5) for fifth. The nationality of the teachers were of mixed cultures. The reading/library media specialist is referred to as the (R) researcher.

Informed consent forms was given to all participants and teachers. Written permission forms was sent home by students, in order to get parents and/or guardian permission to participate. All participants were informed that participation is voluntary. The study was based on voluntary permission. Students were not required to participate, if they choose not to do so. Since teachers are already incorporating multicultural literature and activities in their classrooms, it was not necessary to make major changes in their lesson plans.

All data obtained was used in-house only. Information gathered from all participants were locked in a file cabinet at Bayou school. The study was conducted at Bayou school. Parental involvement is low. Bayou school is a public elementary school that is using the Common Core curriculum. The Common Core curriculum is strictly based on non-fiction, informational texts, and technology usage.

The Common Core curriculum is modeled by the teachers, but is student directed. Since the curriculum is student directed, students have the opportunity for cultural diversity. There was only one school included in this study. Preparation for major standardized tests started early winter and was administered in late spring. Closing of school year ended in May.

The following is a list of suggested books that was incorporated in the African American folktale lessons. Tables are introduced in the findings, which provided the readers with an overview of the analyzed data in this study.

Folktale Origins

Central Africa Folktale

The Village of Round and Square Houses by Ann Grifalconi

The village of Tos is like no other village in the world. For in this village a grandmother explains to her listeners why in their village on the side of a volcano the men live in square houses and the women live in round ones. The story of how this came to be is told from the point of view of a young girl who grew up there.

South Africa Folktales

Nelson Mandela's Favorite African Folktales by Nelson Mandela

In one volume is a collection of thirty-two folktales that were selected by Nelson Mandela. Those tales were selected with the desire that children all over the world would read and appreciate the rich culture that South Africa has to offer.

Abiyoyo by Pete Seeger

This book is based on South African Lullaby and Folk Story. The story takes place in a small village. The story centers on a boy and his father and their encounters with Abiyoyo, the giant. The boy and his father were banished from the town for making mischief. The boy and his father are welcomed back, when they find a way to make the dreaded giant, Abiyoyo who terrorized the village disappeared.

West African Folktales

Anansi does the Impossible: An Ashanti Tale by Verna Aardema

Long ago, when the earth was set down and the sky was lifted up, all the folktales were owned by the Sky God. And Anansi, that cunning little spider, was determined to buy them back. The payment? A live python, one real fiery, and forty-seven stinging hornets. Not such a high price to pay for all the folktales on earth. Anansi and his wife outsmart the Sky God and win back the beloved folktales of their people.

Anansi finds a Fool: An Ashanti Tale by Verna Aardema

Sometimes a spider and other times a man. “When you dig a hold for someone else, you will fall into it yourself”. Acclaimed folklorist Verna Aardema weaves a funny and magical African tale about a lazy Anansi, who wants a fishing partner who will do all the work with Anansi getting the fish. But when his clever friend Bonsu becomes this partner, Anansi’s plan backfires.

The Hatseller and the Monkeys: A West African Folktales by Baba Wague Diakite

A man sets off to sell his hats, only to have them stolen by a treeful of mischievous monkeys.

Anansi and the Moss-Covered Rock by Eric A. Kimmel

Anansi the Spider uses a strange moss-covered rock in the forest to trick all the other animals, until little Bush Deer decides he needs to learn a lesson.

Anansi and the Talking Melon by Eric A. Kimmel

A clever spider tricks Elephant and some other animals with his clever tongue into thinking the melon in which he is hiding can talk. While Anansi is trapped inside a watermelon, he tricks Possum into believing that the watermelon can talk. Possum proceeds to bring the watermelon to King Bear, who is outraged and throws the fruit, which frees Anansi when it lands and cracks open.

How Anansi Obtained the Sky God's Stories Janice Skivington

In this trickster tale from West Africa, Anansi the spider sets out to retrieve all the stories of the world from Nyami, the sky god.

The Orphan Girl and Other Stories by Buchi Offodile

A listing of West African folktales is compiled in one book. The author provides the stories and discusses how the tales came to be at the end of the book.

Tales from West Africa by Martin Bennett

This is an interesting retelling of folktales from long time ago. This collection is about some tricksters, who get into sticky situations and are able to trick themselves out of the situation.

West African Folktales by W. H. Barker B. S. and Cecilia Sinclair

This collection of famous tales is suitable for children to be read by adults.

Who's in Rabbit House: A Masai Tale by Verna Aardema

This story is about a rabbit whose home becomes inhabited by a mean creature called "The Long One." Rabbit's animal friends come by, one by one, and see Rabbit sitting outside her home. When they ask what is happening, Rabbit desperately explains that she can not find a way to remove the awful creature from her home. Finally, desperate to move back in, Rabbit allows frog to try out his ingenious plan to remove the scary creature from her home.

Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears by Verna Aardema

A cumulative African tale of misadventure begins when Mosquito whispers a lie into Iguana's ears. The chain of events that follows result in an Animal Council meeting, where the truth is discovered. This book won the Caldecott Medal award.

Bruh Rabbit and the Tar Baby Girl by Virginia Hamilton

Bruh Rabbit may indeed have met his match when he comes across a tar baby in the middle of the road. The baby's deaf dumb, and blind attitude infuriates the plucky trickster, just as Wolf planned. When Bruh Rabbit gets entangled in the tar baby's sticky embrace, has he finally been foiled by his long-term enemy? Certainly not, if Wolf falls for Bruh Rabbit's clever reverse-psychology and tricks the wily rabbit into the briar patch.

Other African American Folktales and Cultural Heritage Books

Assorted African Folktales

Black Folktales by Julius Lester

A listing of stories that are told in the cities and villages of Africa and on street corners, stoops, porches, barber shops, and whatever else in America black people gather.

Her Stories African American Folktales, Fairy Tales, and True Tales by Virginia Hamilton

This book contains stories told by Newbery Medalist Virginia Hamilton. The nineteen stories focus on the magical lore and imaginations of African American women.

Mightier than the Sword by Jane Yolen

Mightier than the Sword, is about folktales told for strong boys. This book teaches boys the value of strength without force.

People Could Fly (The) by Virginia Hamilton

In this retelling of folktales, a group of slaves, unable to bear their sadness and starvation any longer, call upon the African magic that allows them to fly away.

A Pride of African Tales by Donna L. Washington

This is a collection of African folktales originating in the storytelling traditions. The stories are beautifully illustrated from different regions in Africa. Stories such as, “The Boy Who Wanted the Moon,” set in the Congo, explains why there are monkeys in the world.

A Story A Story by Gail E. Haley

This is the story of how African stories, called “Spider Stories” came to be. Spider Stories are stories about how small, defenseless men and animals come to be heroes. As the story goes, a man called Ananse, the Spider Man, wanted to buy all the stories, which were in the hands of the Sky God. The Sky God tells Ananse that he must capture a leopard, a group of stinging hornets, and a fairy and send them up to him if he is to be granted his wish. Ananse, not big and strong, but clever, delivers the leopard, hornets, fairy, and is given the stories to scatter about the land. This story is a Caldecott Medal book.

Folktales and Fairytales of Africa by Lila Green

This book contains an assorted list of stories told from the old-yet now continent of Africa with colorful characters from the animal kingdom.

Cultural Heritage Books

Kwanzaa

Childcraft (2011) defines Kwanzaa as a “traditional African harvest festival. It is a celebration of the rich cultural roots of African Americans. Kwanzaa takes place from December 26 to January 1. Each evening during Kwanzaa, the family lights a candle in a special candleholder called a kinara. Each candle stands for one of the seven goals of Kwanzaa (p. 182).”

The Nguzo Saba (seven goals and/ or principles) are: kuumba, ujamaa, kujichagulia, ujima, nia, and imani. Jones (2000) defines each goal. They are as follows:

- “Kumumba means creativity- Think of ways that will benefit the community financially and spiritually.
- Ujamaa means cooperative economics-Create and support black-owned business.
- Kujichagulia means self-determination- Do not let others make decisions for you.
- Ujima means collective work and responsibility- Work together with others.
- Nia means purpose- Support the community as a whole and help other individuals in the community become the best they can be.
- Imani means faith-Believe in yourself and in others (p. 115).”

These goals as stated in Childcraft (2011) are ways that people can work together to build their communities and nourish pride and creativity among African Americans. The name Kwanzaa comes from a fruit in Swahili, which is an African language (p. 182).” Just before Kwanzaa comes to a close, there is a celebration of music, dancing and sharing African food.

Jones (2000) states that Kwanzaa has meanings. She argues that during the 1960s, African Americans were facing tough hurdles; they were fighting against racism, and struggling to build their communities. Dr. Maulana Karenga, a civil rights leader and teacher founded Kwanzaa in 1966. Dr. Karenga, wanted to do something to help African Americans stay strong and come together as a community. He wanted them to have:

- “Pride in themselves
- Pride in their people
- Pride about their culture and traditions of their African ancestors
- Pride in working as a team to produce results (p. 115).”

There is another celebration that begins at the end of Kwanzaa. It is called Karamu. The following are Kwanzaa books that can be read during the holiday and throughout the year:

My First Kwanzaa Book by Deborah M. Newton Chocolate

This story introduces Kwanzaa, the holiday in which Afro-Americans celebrate their cultural heritage.

Seven Candles for Kwanzaa by Andrea Davis Pinkney

This book describes the origins and practices of Kwanzaa, the seven-day festival during which people of African descent rejoice in their ancestral values.

The researcher used these methods for her study proved positive ideas in the findings. As Beaty (1997) argues that “multicultural ideas are “caught “rather than “taught” that is, multicultural attitudes are developed through everyday experiences rather than formal lessons. Multicultural ideas and activities, therefore, should be thoroughly integrated throughout all activities every day-not only in fragmented units (p. 5).”

Activities and writings of second, third, and fifth graders were examined during the duration of the African Folktale unit. The researcher and teachers incorporated the following goals for the participants during the folktale unit.

- The participants appreciated and had an awareness of African American folktale culture.
- The participants learned about their culture and how to appreciate other cultures as well.
- The participants achieved lifelong skills of learning how important it is to be themselves and become their own hero.

The researcher and teachers have a strong compassion for their teaching and their commitment to educating their children to become lifelong readers. The units were carefully planned in order to make sure that all students will be able to complete all activities planned regarding folktales. All written work done by students in their response journal was collected and analyzed for important details.

All data gathered from this study are discussed in chapter 4 which are the (findings) results, study limitations and discussion sections. Findings of the study are discussed in chapter 5 which include the study's (conclusion), and implications for future (study) research.

Study Limitations

Due to limitation of time, the study was designed to one specific culture in the school in order to gather in-house data. The activities with (students) participants took two days per three-weeks for forty-five minutes each week for a total of two-hundred and seventy minutes to complete. The survey with teacher participants took fifteen-minutes to complete and thirty-minutes to complete with student participants.

Rubric for the Study

After three weeks of running my study “*A Qualitative Study Utilizing Non-Fiction African-American Folktales: Process and Product with Struggling Second, Third, and Fifth Graders in North Louisiana*” it is now time for me to gather my data for analysis. I will begin with data gathering from interviews and written communications with the three elementary school teachers, reading specialist/library media specialist, and four students in grades second, third, and fifth grades.

The problem of this study was for the researcher to explore how reading non-fiction African-Americans folktales to struggling readers will affect their comprehension skills and attitude toward other cultures other than their own. After carefully researching and analyzing the subject, the researcher has gained more knowledge about subject through staff and students' participation.

As a result, the researcher will propose a solution in her findings and conclusion. In researching this subject and with the interaction with participants, the researcher has found the missing pieces to her puzzle. This subject was interesting to the researcher, because it opened

doors to a topic that was not fully understood by adults, children and of course the researcher. It is the desire of the researcher that the investigation of this topic will maintain readers' interest in African-Americans folktales and how struggling readers can benefit from this study. A complete description of all investigated and research work regarding the case studies have been documented and is noted in this study. The researcher have taken the following approach in her investigation:

- Researched the topic by utilizing books and articles from databases
- Interviews and written communication with participants
- Data collection gathering of all facts and materials provided to the researcher
- Analysis of all case studies

Folktale Books Used in Study

The following books were used with participants in this study:

Second Grade Participant

1. *Anansi and the Talking Melon* retold by Eric A. Kimmel-West Africa Folktale
2. *A Story A Story –An African Tale* retold by Gail E. Haley (Caldecott Award Medal)- Caribbean Isles Folktale
3. *Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears* by Verna Aardema- (Caldecott Award Medal)- West Africa Folktale

Third Grade Participants

4. *Abiyoyo* by Pete Seeger-South Africa Folktale
5. *The Village of Round and Square* by Ann Grifalconi- (Caldecott Honor Medal)- Central Africa Folktale
6. *Who's in Rabbit's House* by Verna Aardema- West Africa Folktale

Fifth Grade Participant

7. *The Orphan Girl and Other Stories (The Serpent Groom)* retold by Buchi Offodile- West Africa (Benin) Folktale
8. *Nelson Mandela's Favorite African Folktales (The Enchanting Song of the Magical Bird and The Cat Who Came Indoors)* by Nelson Mandela-South Africa Folktales

The following titles were listed in the methods section to be used in this study, but were out-of-stock or discontinued. They are as follows:

1. *Anansi and the Moss-Covered Rock* retold by Eric A. Kimmel
2. *Anansi does the Impossible* retold by Verna Aardema- A West African (Ashanti) Folktale
3. *Anansi Finds a Fool* by Verna Aardema- West Africa
4. *The Hatseller and the Monkeys* by Baba Wague' Diakite'- West African Folktale
5. *Mightier than the Sword* (World Folktales for Strong Boys) collected and told by Jane Yolen
6. *A Pride of African Tales* by Donna L. Washington-(Coretta Scott King Award Medal for illustrations by James Ransome)

Before running the study the researcher acquired the (IRB) Internal Review Board approval and the North Louisiana School Board. At the beginning of the study, the eight participants received their consent forms for approval from their parents (Appendix 10). Participants' codes were assigned to those eight selected participants and the three teachers. Only four consent forms from participants were signed and returned to the researcher. Codes were assigned to participants as follows:

Students:

- P- Participant
- Number next to the letter P indicates participant number

- Number after the dash indicates participant grade

Second Graders

1. Participant P1-2

Third Graders

2. Participant P3-3
3. Participant P4-3

Fifth Graders

4. Participant P7-5

Teachers

1. Teacher T1-2
2. Teacher T2-3

Organization of Activities to Accompanied Folktale Books

Unit Timeline- African-American Folktales

Two months before start of study:

- Select and research topic
- Formulate research problem/questions (all participants-students and teachers)
- Selection process for struggling readers' participants. Includes teachers' input
Assessment process for struggling reader's participants. Researcher's assessment of the
Fry's Word List (2nd, 3rd, 5th)-Appendix 2, 3 & 4
Elementary reading attitude survey sheets-Appendix 5

One month before start of study:

- Ordered folktale books

Two to three weeks before start of study:

- Distribute consent forms-Appendix 1

- Arrival of folktale books
- Group books accordingly to reading levels of participants
- Select and/or design activities for participants (Appendix 7, & 9)
- Design comprehension questions for folktale books

One to two week before start of study:

- All designed and/or selected unit lesson plans/activities must be completed for participants before start of study (Appendix 28, 29, 32, 33, 34, & 35)

Rubric for Study Start-up Unit - Three Weeks Timeline Lessons (two sessions per week for Forty-five minutes)

- Week 1- Day 1 and Day 2

On day one of week one, using the above timeline the researcher implemented her study with the confirmed participants. The researcher began her study by introducing the unit on African-American folktales and reading a folktale book titled *Folktales and Fairytale of Africa* selected and retold by Lila Green and showing a DVD on *American Legends* to all participants. This DVD produced by Disney was a collection of classic stories based on great American heroes. Participants were engaged as listeners/viewers and tried to respond to questions when asked. Participants were given hand-outs on the following:

- Reasons to Read- A listing of why reading is important was discussed with students along with examples (Appendix 11).
- Independent Reading- A listing of suggestions for students to become independent readers was another helpful tool that was provided to students (Appendix 12).
- To Understand What you Read- This hand-out covered causes & effects, main ideas, supporting details, how to make connections, the author's purpose, context clues, how to

make predictions, visualize what is true or false, and to be able to distinguish facts from opinions (Appendix 13).

- Good Readers Focus on Text Structure- A birds-eye view of the things that a reader should focus their attention on such as: the problem/ solution (identifies the problem and solution), cause/effect (why an event occurred and describes the effect of that event), descriptive (a listing of characteristics, features and examples), sequence (chronological order), and compare/contrast (how things are alike and how things or different (Appendix 14).
- Understanding Non-Fiction Text Features- The organizational structure of non-fiction books were reviewed with students. The researcher used examples such as the books that will be read in the study.
- Bloom's Taxonomy (*The Big Six*) Using *The Big Six*, the researcher reviewed the six important things that a reader should be able to do after reading a book (Appendix 15).

The participants in second, third, and fifth grades including the researcher used Define Terms activity sheet (dictionaries and encyclopedias) to answer the following questions (Appendix 6):

1. Who are African-Americans?
2. What are folktales?
3. What is a storyteller?

- Week 1-Day 2

On day two of week 1, students were provided with a review guide and a record sheet on folktales (Appendix 30). At the end of the first week sessions, participants in grades second through fifth grades were provided a folktale reading list. Participants were asked to select three folktale books to read. Students listed titles and author's name on the list.

- Week 2- Day 3

Day three of week 2, students in grades second and third grades (cc) compare (same) and contrast (different) two folktale stories on their story map (Appendix 17). Fifth grades completed their paragraph structure sheet regarding the story and the characters (Appendix 16). The researcher incorporated this activity in order to improve participants reading and listening skills. When students develop stronger comprehension skills, their knowledge of things that are alike and different improves.

- Week 2-Day 4

Activities for week two of day four included a vocabulary dictionary sheet for second graders (Appendix 21). Participants were asked to write two difficult words from one folktale story that they had read and define those words using the dictionary. Then participants were asked to compare their words to see if the other participants had the same words. Third graders were asked to map their story (Appendix 18).

Participants mapped the story setting, beginning, middle and ending of one story. Choosing two words to complete on the Venn diagram was the fifth grader task. Then the fifth grade participant was asked to write one contrast and comparison sentence.

- Week 3- Day 5

How the Leopard Got His Spots is a video read by Danny Glover based on the book written by Rudyard Kipling. Participants viewed the video for thirty-minutes and completed the cloze passage based on the story. The passage was given to all second, third, and fifth grade participants to complete. Students were given a list of six words to fill in the blanks (Appendix 8).

- Week 4-Day 6

In order to culminate the unit and weekly lessons, participants were given another activity to complete. The first activity sheet was a folktale origin sheet for second grade (Appendix 31). Using the world map and a blank world map that was provided to students, participants were asked to fill out a slip and connect the slip on the map to where the folktale originated.

The second activity sheet was (KWL) What I Know, What I Want to Know, and What I Learned for third graders. Participants had to tell what they know, what they want to know, and what they learned from the folktale lessons (Appendix 23).

Lastly, participant in grade five was shown the DVD on the *Greatest American Tall Tales and Legends* created by Schlessinger Media. In this video the characters and their stories are constantly evolving as it is retold over and over. This video is a huge part of the folklore tradition. Stories such as this one and other folktales began in the tradition of oral reading to entertain people in their culture.

The researcher selected this DVD in order to scaffold participants in creating their own African-American folktale. Participants had to write their own folktale entitled *My Folktale* (Appendix 19) using the *Six Traits of Writing* handout (Appendix 27). Participants selected a topic, researched their character, designed a story map or use the map provided in previous lesson to select the setting, hero, problem, events/climax, solution and or resolution.

When participants completed their task, participants was asked to review, edit, and/or revise their folktale. Upon completion of the task, students will be able to get their folktale published in *The Seedling* (yearly poetry contest for elementary students). *The Seedling* is a school wide contest sponsored by the school district.

As Holmes (2003) states “whether information is gathered from reading a text, listening to a speaker, participating in an activity, or watching a video, it all must be deciphered and analyzed (p. 4).” Based on similar graphic organizers the researcher redesigned the organizers to be in

line with her unit on African-American folktales and struggling readers. Students learned how information is processed and how to process information by developing strong comprehension skills through the utilization of graphic organizers.

Holmes (2003) concluded that “graphic organizer is an at-a-glance, visual representation of the important details of a text or topic (p. 4).” Holmes (2003) continued to state that “information is organized to help students interpret, summarize, compare, or connect information (p. 4).” The graphic organizers used in this study were helpful to the researcher and teachers in getting students to express and comprehend what they had read.

Because of the fact that students have different learning styles and abilities, it is not an easy task to teach struggling readers how to integrate information learned in the past (prior knowledge) and how to retain current information (new) and merged them together. Teachers must have the skills such as, a reading specialist degree to have the patience and courage to integrate and implement different learning strategies with struggling readers. A careful assessment of struggling readers must be done and analyzed for recommendations.

Resnick and Hyatt (2002) encourage teachers, parents and educators to “focus on developing children comprehension skills which is the reading and thinking processes associated with the printed word. Resnick and Hyatt provide the following philosophies for successful reading:

- “Reading should be fun and relaxing activity
- Children should read stories that relate to or build on their own experiences
- Vocabulary should be presented in a sequential and logical progression. Vocabulary should be used in context and repeated often.
- Select short readings that will be of some interest to young readers
- Applied comprehension skill in context to make reading more relevant
- Devise multiple choice exercises that develops test taking strategies (p.1)”

In Cisler (2010) book *Understanding Questions* she states that the old adage “practice makes perfect is an excellent way to expose children to the concepts being taught in school.” As with folktales, the more participants read books the more they became familiar with various stories. And the more they became familiar with the stories the participants were able to answer questions such as, *who, what, where, when, why, and how?* Cisler stated that *Understanding Questions* goes beyond just understanding why and when something happened. In addition she states that “children need visual cues to help them remember or understand abstractions (p.3).” Cisler provided a question word chart in order to aid students in developing their comprehension skills when understanding questions.

In the book *Story Elements* by Schaffer (2012) the author discussed elements that authors use in creating their stories. The following elements were discussed with participants and used to strengthen students’ understanding of the character, setting, problem (conflict), and plot (p. 3).” Students used the components of the *Big Six* as well in discussing and analyzing their stories. When using various elements to evaluate stories, students will get a better feeling for lifelong reading. They (readers) will have a feeling for self-expression and will be able to develop their critical thinking skills at an early age.

Participants were introduced to analogy. Foster (2011) describes an analogy as being a “type of comparison- a likeness is found between two unlike things (p. 3).” Participants developed their cognitive processes and critical thinking skills by focusing their attention on visual aids, understanding of the story, developing their vocabulary bank, and being able to distinguish facts from fiction. When students are able to understand how to reason they are then able to find that connection between the like and dislike of things. Foster says it is best when students are “able to think outside the box (p. 3).” By extensive training and teaching students to be more creative in their thoughts and responses will be of value to students as they grow older.

Lastly, participants used their skills in reviewing details such as, summarizing details. Schaffer (2012) maintains that “summarizing involves the skills of comprehending, focusing on important information, and retelling it in a concise forms (p. 3).” Participants were given guided activity sheets to aid them in developing their reading and writing skills of oral and written lessons.

Interpretation of survey data analysis

One of the most important findings in a case study is to observe the life of its participants. Using a qualitative evaluation method of the participants from the elementary reading attitude survey and the student information sheet, the investigator was able to obtain a biographical sketch of all participants. Those sketches were used to aid the investigator in learning why the participants are struggling readers. A qualitative checklist method of evaluating the participants work was also used. The checklist used, checked into the feelings of its participants when they read a book.

Case Study Biographical Information on Participants

In Part 1 of the survey participants were asked to give a short biographical sketch of themselves and their family. Part 2 asked participants for background information regarding their interest and attitude. Part 3 dealt with the following assessments. To prevent duplication of narratives, the researcher is providing a brief sketch that detailed all assessments completed with participants. They are as follows:

Fry’s Basic Sight Vocabulary Test

Using the Fry’s word list for grades 2, 3, and 5 students were assessed on the words that they knew, pronounce, and be able to use the words in sentences.

Folktale Words to Know and Define Activity Sheet

At the beginning of the unit, participants were asked to use a dictionary and/or an encyclopedia to define the following words:

After the unit was taught to participants, they were asked to read at least two folktale books (2nd and 3rd graders) and/or two passages (5th graders) from a list of suggested books.

How Leopard Got His Spots Cloze Passage Activity Sheet

Using the cloze passage from *How Leopard Got His Spots*, participants were asked to use the word list (context clues) provided to them to retell this folktale story. This passage was designed to help participants with building their vocabulary and comprehension skills. This activity met Common Core State Standards for reading and literature (Key Ideas and Details) RL. 2.2, RL. 2.3.

These standards require students to recount stories, including fables and folktales from diverse culture, and determine their central message, lesson, or moral. While participants were still grouped together, they were asked to check each other's work.

Folktale Vocabulary Dictionary Activity Sheet

This activity required participants to read one folktale story and write and define (using a dictionary) two difficult words on the lines provided. This activity met Common Core State Standards for reading and literature (Craft and Structure) RL. 3.4. This standard requires students to determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text.

Compare and Contrast Map

In order to complete this activity, participants were asked to compare and contrast characters using the activity sheet provided. This activity met Common Core State Standards for reading and literature (Key Ideas and Details) RL. 3.2, RL. 3.3. This standard requires students to describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges. This activity was

designed to improve participants' comprehension skills and provide them with the skills needed for determining things that are similar and different.

Researcher and participants read *Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears* as a group.

Participants were asked to select two characters from the story and write down the things that they like and dislike about the characters.

Paragraph Structure

The researcher and participants read a folktale story from the book *The Orphan Girl and Other Stories* titled *The Serpent Groom*. Participants had to recall the story and complete the paragraph structure with the correct answers.

My Folktale Venn Diagram

The researcher and participants read a folktale story from *Nelson Mandela's Favorite African Folktales* titled *The Enchanting Song of the Magical Bird and the Cat Who Came Indoors*. Participants were asked to choose two words to complete the Venn diagram. After selecting the two words, participants then were asked to write one contrasting and comparison sentence on the lines below the Venn diagram.

In Part 4 an individualized instructional plan for struggling readers is provided. The books read and activities provided gave participants the opportunity to develop basic skills such as, applying critical thinking skills, developing stronger listening skills, build stronger vocabulary, retelling important details in order to strengthen their comprehension skills, and to develop their motor skills such as utilizing their handwriting talents.

For the purpose of the findings for this study, the ethnicity of the participants are all African-American students. They will be identified by their participant number and grade level. The demographic of the four participants are two males and two females. One of the male participant

is a second grader, the two females are in third grade, and the fourth participant is a male and he is in fifth grade.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

Product

Students and Teachers Case Studies:

The findings resulted in a three weeks study with participants that started the first week in April of 2014. Due to major standardized tests, participants were not studied during the second and third week in April. Study of participants re-started the third week in April and ended the last week in April of 2014. The wrap-up sessions with students and teachers were held the first week in May of 2014. Student data and biographical information were taken from the interest and attitude inventory surveys.

Case Study P1-2

Part-1 Student Data

Participant 1-2 is a second grader at an elementary school located in North Louisiana called Bayou Elementary. This male participant was born on March 28, 2006. He lives with his mom, dad, baby brother, his mother's sister, and her baby. P1-2 was selected based on the recommendation from his teacher and his Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) of 0.3-1.3. Renaissance Learning Reading Test (Accelerated Reading-AR) reading range report of September of 2013 and DIBELS first assessment in September for the need for support (NFS) for intensive tutoring and DIBELS second assessment in February for the need for support (NFS) for intensive tutoring.

Based on these assessments P1-2 was identified as a struggling reader. P1-2 is one of 15 struggling readers out of 20 students in this class. P1-2's teacher states that he has a problem working in large groups, but does well one-on-one. He is disruptive during class sessions. One afternoon I went to his classroom to get him for his session, but I was told that he was disrupting the class and he was sent to another classroom during movie time.

In first grade he was screened for a second time for AD/HD score of 25 on 5-13-15 (wrong year was written down in his files). On May 15, 2013, he was in the K-3 initial screening for AD/HD for easily to be distracted, restless, difficulties in waiting for his turn, following directions, sustaining attention, playing quietly, talks excessively, interrupts or intrudes on others, does not listen, and often loses things necessary for tasks and assignments. He often forgets to bring necessary information back for his sessions.

His favorite color is orange. He likes peppermint and apple juice. There are no indication as of yet any medical problems. P1-2 attendance is poor. He arrives to school late and is often checked out and in by his parents. There are several unexcused absences. He is not on any medication, but he is on free or reduced lunches.

Since being in second grade, he has transferred once. His father's occupation is a produce manager at a local grocery store and his mother works as a caregiver at a daycare center.

Part-2 Background Information Interest and Attitude Inventory

Family, Social, Educational History and Physical Factors

To learn and to play are what he likes most about school and does not like to play in school. He stated that he is really good at reading and wishes that his teacher would let him choose a book. He feels that he can do better in school if he can get some extra help with his homework especially math. His wish that he could sit in front of the classroom. He feels that he behaves well in class, because he loves his teacher.

His favorite book is *The Castle Crown*, because it is a good story. When asked to list three words that would describe himself, he said "that he does not like getting hurt." He loves to play games with his friends and likes to play by himself with his Play Station 360. Participant 1-2 stated that when he watches TV, he likes watching *The Walking Dead*. If given \$100.00 in cash he would buy himself an iPad and a Laptop.

There are some behavioral problems occurring in class. He was suspended from school for three days for fighting a classmate. When he returned to school, participant was able to complete assignments missed. Lastly, he would like for his teacher to know that he is good at home.

Part-3 Assessment

Fry's Basic Sight Vocabulary Test

Using the Fry's word list *The Second Hundred* participant 2 missed 57 words out of 100.

Folktale Words to Know and Define Activity Sheet

Using the dictionary and an encyclopedia with the help of the researcher, participant was able to locate and define African-Americans, folktale and storyteller.

My Folktale Reading List Sign-Up Sheet

Participant 1-2 read 1 book titled *A Story A Story* by Gail E. Haley.

How Leopard Got His Spots Cloze Passage Activity Sheet

Participant 1-2 got 1 out of 6 answers correct.

Folktale Vocabulary Dictionary Activity Sheet

Participant 1-2 listed two difficult words and their definitions from *A Story A Story*. The two words are as follows:

Nyame

Stories

Compare and Contrast Map

Participant 1-2 read *Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears*. The activity required participant to list one character they like and dislike and list some characteristics of both. Participant 1-2 wrote:

Compare-Elephant

Contrast-Elephant: upset, bap, upset

Writing Sample

Participant 1-2 letter formation utilizing curves and lines movement on some of his activities are beautiful such as, his cloze passage. When assessing his other work such as, compare and contrast sheet his writing was poorly written. It is suggested that participant 1 be encouraged to use the same letter formation on all assignments. It is recommended when participant writes differently on some assignments and not on others, that he be shown his work.

He must be able to critique his own work and handwriting daily. Recommend that he list all of the things that he is doing incorrectly. With assistance, he must work on those problems areas. If this discussion does not work, he should be encouraged to copy all assignments off the board and handwriting charts.

Part 4-Instructional Plan

Fry's Word List

Participant 1-2 is a second grader, but was unable to pronounce or identify the majority of the words listed on Fry's Word List- *The Second Hundred*. He pronounced only 43 words correctly out of 100. Participant 1-2 completed the 100 word list, but reached the frustration level mid-way through the list.

An instructional intervention plan for the 57 words missed by participant will be recommended to participant's teacher. The recommendation is to write all words missed on index cards for participant to practice pronouncing at home and school in order to identify the words in the future.

Folktales to Know and Define

Participant 1-2 completed this assignment with help, but will need additional help with his alphabets and alphabetical order along with locating guide words.

My Folktale Reading List

Participant 1-2 read one folktale book by himself. It is recommended that participant 1 stays on track with reading more easy reader books with more pictures and fewer words. Once participant is able to pronounce all words missed he will then be able to move into small chapter books.

How Leopard Got His Spots

Participant 1-2 did poorly with this cloze passage assignment. After reading the passage and locating the correct word to fill in the blanks, he was only able to get 1 answer correct out of 6.

Compare and Contrast

Participant 1-2 did not do well with this assignment. Participant 1 will need extra help with comparing and contrasting things. Participant 1-2 does not have a clear understanding of written or printed materials. He will need additional help with literacy. Participant 1-2 is still young, but quick interventions must be provided so that he is not left behind. Participant 1-2 handwriting is average for a second grader.

Case Study P3-3

Part-1 Student Data

Participant 3-3 is a third grader at an elementary school located in north Louisiana called Bayou Elementary. She was born on January 4, 2005. She lives with her father, mother and younger sister, who attends the same school with her. P3-3 was selected based on the recommendation from her teacher and her Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) of 0.8-1.8.

Renaissance Learning Reading Test (Accelerated Reading-AR) reading range report in September of 2013 and DIBELS first assessment in September of 2013 showed a need for support (NFS) for intensive tutoring and DIBELS second assessment in February for the need for support (NFS) for intensive tutoring. I chose P3-3 based on these assessments as a struggling reader. P3-3 is one of 22 struggling readers in this class.

Her favorite color is pink. She likes chocolate and orange drink. There are some indications of vision problems with her right eye 20/40 and left eye 20/30 according to her medical card report in second grade. Parents requested that she be retested in third grade. Presently, she is wearing glasses. Her growth and hearing exams indicates that she is on target for her age. As for as her weight, she is larger than then average size student in her class. P3-3 has a good attendance rate. Her father attended high school up to 11th grade with mother indicating she has some education after High School.

Participant attended Pre-K Program. Her teacher stated that she is a super student, she could spell and write her name. She writes with her left hand. She is not disabled or receiving any special education services during the school day, but attends an afterschool program. Her family income is under \$10,000 and are receiving Medicaid. Participate receives free or reduced price meal at school. Last year the family was living with another family, because they could not afford affordable housing.

Part-2 Background Information Interest and Attitude Inventory

Family, Social, Educational History and Physical Factors

When asked what she like most about school? Participant said that “she gets to learn to read.” She does not like to read, but wishes her teacher would let her choose “her own games to play.” Participant stated that “she is really good in math and need some extra help with multiplication.” She wishes that she could sit next to her teacher in the classroom.

Participant P3-3 says that “she behaves well in the class and does not play in class.” Her favorite book is *Chocolate Fever*, because she says the character “ate chocolate in the story.” She loves to watch Disney Channel. Participant 3-3 says, if she was surprised with a gift of \$1,000.00 she would “buy new clothes.” Lastly, when asked what is the one thing that she really

wants her teacher to know? She said that she would like for her teacher to know that “she is not mean.” Participant 3 is a spoiled child who wishes to have her way all the time.

Part-3 Assessment

Fry’s Basic Sight Vocabulary Test

Participant 3-3 missed 9 words out of 100.

Folktale Words to Know and Define Activity Sheet

Using a dictionary and an encyclopedia with the help of the researcher, participant was able to locate and define African-Americans, folktale and storyteller.

My Folktale Reading List Sign-Up Sheet

Participant 3-3 read one book titled *The Village of Round and Square Houses* by Ann Grifalconi.

How Leopard Got His Spots (A Cloze Passage Activity Sheet)

Participant 3-3 said she read the cloze passage, but did not get any of the six answers correct.

Folktale Vocabulary Dictionary Activity Sheet

Do not test.

Map Your Story

The story of *Abiyoyo* was read in a group setting by the researcher and the three grade participants. Participants recalled the story by writing a response for each question of where the setting took place, who was the hero, what happened at the beginning to the story, middle and ending of the story. Participants were asked to complete the Map Your Story sheet by responding to the following statements:

Story Setting- Participant stated that setting “took place in a house.”

Characters/Hero- Participant stated that the “boy’s father was the hero.”

Beginning of the story- Participant stated that the “boy’s father played tricks on the people.”

Middle of the story- Participant stated that the “people saw Abiyoyo.”

Ending of the story- Participant comprehension skills of what happened at the end of the story was clear. She stated that “the man and the boy made Abiyoyo disappear.”

Compare and Contrast Map

Two stories were read between the researcher and the participant over a time period frame. The first story was *The Village of Round and Square* by Ann Grifalconi and *Who’s is in Rabbit’s House* by Verna Aardema. Participant 3-3 main characters were Nino and Rabbit. She compared Nino as always a slept while Rabbit was more alert and always thinking how he could outsmart other characters.

Writing Sample

Participant 3-3 has some problems with writing neatly, letter formation such as forming letters with curves, straight lines and oblique lines (slanted).

Part 4-Instructional Plan

Fry’s Basic Sight Vocabulary Test

Participant 3-3 is a third grader and did extremely well on Fry’s Word List-*The Third Hundred*. She pronounces 91 of the 100 words correctly. An instructional plan for the 9 words missed would be to write those words on index cards. Participant should practice those words and using them in sentences. This can be done at home and at school. Participant 3-3 is now ready to move to the Fry’s word list- *The Fourth Hundred*.

Folktales Words to Know and Define Activity Sheet

Participant 3-3 had some difficulties in locating the words in the dictionary and the encyclopedia.

My Folktale Reading List

Participant 3-3 said that she enjoyed reading *The Village of Round and Square Houses*. .

How Leopard Got His Spots

This activity was given to students in order to enhance their comprehension and vocabulary skills for higher learning. Participant 3-3 did not get any of the 6 answer correct. Participant could not demonstrate understanding of the cloze passage using the words provided. Recalling major events and what characters did and other key points, such as the challenges that the character encounter was a big struggle for this participant.

Map your Story

Participant 3-3 identified the literary elements in the story. She was able to listen and respond to who the characters were, the hero, what happened at the beginning, middle, and the ending of the story. Participant did make connection to the story in order to summarize what happened in the story.

Compare and Contrast Map

This activity allowed students to improve their reading and language skills in order to be able to compare two things that are similar and two things that are different in the stories. Participant 3 completed this assignment and was able to recall the similarities and differences between two characters and heroes in the stories. Participant 3-3 was able to recall, compare and make comparison with the characters, but writing and spelling words was difficult for her.

Case Study P4-3

Part-1 Student Data

Participant 4-3 is a shy female student that attends the same school as participant 1 and 3. Participant 4-3 was born on March 1, 2005. She lives with her mom, uncle, three brothers, sister, and cousin. Participant 4-3 has speech difficulties and language development problems. The only known service that she is receiving individualized speech lessons twice a week. I was told by her teacher that she has submitted paperwork for her to be included as a student needing special education services.

She cannot read, or recognize most of her alphabets and numbers. Participant 4-3 walks to school and has perfect conduct behavior grades in her class. Her physical appearance is average. Her older brother in fifth grade is currently receiving special education services and younger brother who is in the first grade will be recommended as well for special services. As I continued to research and study this participant, I decided to request to see her cumulative folder.

While reading the information in her cumulative folder, I discovered that in kindergarten she was at three schools during one year. Those schools were listed as, school A, B, and Bayou school. Her parents transferred her to school C and back to Bayou school in second grade. She dropped from Bayou school during the year and enrolled in school D. Participant then returned back to Bayou school as a third grader for the full year.

In her cumulative school folder her mother stated that they had moved during the past three years several times to seek housing and temporary work. Participant 4 was given the IOWA basic skills test in second grade. Her Survey Battery Total score on the national percentile ranked her at 6. This means that she scored higher than 6 percent of second grade students nationally. Her overall achievement was below average for second grade.

Participant 4-3 reading total score was well below average when compared with other students on the national level. The report continued to compare her strengths and weaknesses and her achievement seems to be consistent from one area to another.

Part-2 Background Information Interest and Attitude Inventory

Family History, Social, Educational, and Physical Factors

She likes to have fun and loves to work hard in school. Her favorite color is purple, she loves sour candy and orange soda. The participant says that she is good at playing Barbie games and needs extra help with math. When asked if she needs help with reading, participant says

“yes.” She wishes that she could sit down in the classroom. Participant says she behaves “well” in the classroom. When asked why she stated that, she said, because it is the “right thing to do.”

Her favorite book is *Green Eggs and Ham*. She likes this book, because it is fun.

Participant was asked to describe herself by only using three words. She stated “shoes, clothes and her body.” Participant was asked if she was surprised with a gift of \$1,000.00 cash how would it be used. She would use it to buy her mom and uncle a van. Lastly, she wants her teacher to know “that she is a good student.” Both parents have indicated that they have at least a High School Graduate or a GED diploma. Her parents’ salary range from \$10,000 to \$19, 000. The family is receiving Government Assistance.

Part-3 Assessment

Fry’s Basic Sight Vocabulary Test

Using the Fry’s word list *The Second Hundred*, participant 4-3 missed 97 out of 100 words.

Folktale Words to Know and Define Activity Sheet

Participant was unable to use the dictionary and the encyclopedia to define African-Americans, folktale and storyteller.

My Folktale Reading List Sign-Up Sheet

Participant 4-3 selected *Abiyoyo* by Pete Seeger to read.

How Leopard Got His Spots Cloze Passage Activity Sheet

In reading the cloze passage, participant 4-3 got 1 out of 6 answers correct.

Folktale Vocabulary Dictionary Activity Sheet

Third grade participants did not have to complete this activity sheet.

Map Your Story

Participant 4-3 didn’t complete her map of the story *Abiyoyo*.

Story Setting- Participant did not answer this question

Characters/Hero- Stated that he “played too many tricks on people.”

Beginning of the story- Participant just wrote “he.”

Middle of the story- Participant did not answer this question

Ending of the story- Participant did not answer this question

Compare and Contrast Map

The researcher and the participants read *The Village of Round and Square* by Ann Grifalconi and *Who’s in Rabbit’s House* by Verna Aardema. The two characters that the participant compared was grandma and rabbit. Participants 4-3 stated that “grandma was nice, brave and friendly while rabbit was caring and brave.”

Writing Sample

Participant 4-3 has problems with the movement of letter formation with her curves and lines. She is unable to form some of her manuscript and cursive letters. Another suggestion would be for her to model an adult writing such as, copying her mother’s grocery list, writing daily homework assignments, and rewriting vocabulary words on the back of her easy reader book. It is recommended that participant 4 receive help in and outside of her classroom.

Part 4-Instructional Plan

Participant 4-3 is a third grader, but was unable to pronounce or identify the majority of the words listed on Fry’s Word List-*The Third Hundred*. She pronounced only 3 words correctly out of 100. Participant 4-3 reached the frustration level. An instructional plan for the 97 words missed by participant will be recommended to the participant teacher.

Folktales to Know and Define

Participant 4-3 did not complete this assignment at the first setting, but completed it with help from the researcher as make-up work. She will need one on one help, because she does not

recognize her alphabets. This will have to be taught to her. When that is done, she will then be able to locate dictionary guide words in locating the words she will need to define.

My Folktale Reading List

Participant 4-3 checked out *Abiyoyo*, but was unable to read it. The researcher read it in class. Again, it is advised that participant get one on one tutoring to help her with her basic words. She would love to be able to read, but cannot at this point. It is recommended that this participant read wordless picture books at this point until she is fully ready to move on to books with pictures.

How Leopard Got His Spots

This activity was given to students in order to enhance their comprehension and vocabulary skills for higher learning. Participant 4-3 got only 1 answer out of the 6 answers correct. Participant could not recount the folktale cloze passage, central message, events, and the moral of the story according to the common core reading standards for literature.

Map your Story

Participant 4-3 could not identify the literary elements of the story she read such as: characters-hero, beginning of the story, middle, and ending of the story. Participant 4-3 needed to make some type of connection to the story in order to draw her conclusion of the story. Different strategies will have to be put in place with a one-on-one tutor. Hopefully, participant will be able to summarize the story or other stories using some type of graphic organizer in the future.

Compare and Contrast Map

This activity allowed students to improve their reading and language skills in order to be able to compare two things that are similar and two things that are different in the stories. Participant

4-3 did not do this assignment herself, she asked another student to complete it for her.

Participant could not recall the stories by herself in order to write a response.

Case Study P7-5

Part-1 Student Data

Participant 7-5 is a male fifth grader at Bayou school in north Louisiana. Participant indicated that he was born on March 28, 2003, but on his birth certificate it has April 28, 2002 with a second name listed. He has two brothers and a sister. Participant 7-5 was enrolled in Early Childhood Program at school A (dropped because he was out of his attendance zone), then enrolled in school B on a contract as a fourth grader. He then enrolled at Bayou school as a fifth grader.

He lives with his grandfather. On another survey that the participant completed, he indicated that he lives with his mother. His hearing and behavior in class are normal, but admits that he plays too much. On his ILEAP test of Basic Skills in 2012 as a third grader, his percentile scores ranked him as below average for a third grader in reading, language arts, and mathematics. The LEAP test is one of the most important factor he likes about school.

Last school year, participant 7-5 was administered the LEAP test in order to be promoted to fifth grade. His guardian received a letter on August 7, 2013 stating that *in order to be promoted to the fifth grade, a student must score at least “Basic” on either the English Language Arts test or Mathematics test and “Approaching Basic” on the other*. Participant 7-5 was not promoted to fifth grade, but is in fifth grade through a fourth grade transitional program called 4.5.

This program offers the participant to achieve remedial work from fourth grade and still benefits by learning fifth grade materials. He will be able to progress to sixth grade the next year only if he scores *Basic/Approaching Basic level in English Language Arts, Mathematics and Approaching Basic in Science and Social Studies by the end of this school year 2014-15*.

If participant fails to meet this requirement this spring, he will again be retested during the summer of 2014-15. If he does not make the score, he will remain in fifth grade (as a 4.5 student). Participant 7-5 says he does not like math and he feels that he is a better reading student. As I continued to review his cumulative folder, I noticed a letter from the Child Protection Workers or Officers of the Law as a reported case of child abuse and/or neglect.

The letter dated December of 2011 indicates that participant 7-5 and his brother *must be examined or interviewed immediately*. Participant was removed from his mother's home. There are some possibilities of underlying issues as to why this participants is having these issues. During the year of 2011, participant was recommended for K-3 screening for "At-Risk student, social "At-Risk" and emotional "At-Risk" factors.

The comments listed stated that he can easily get off-track, his motor skills are weak, he is smart, but is weak in math, and he is not motivated. He was checked for AD/HD, but failed it several times.

Part-2 Background Information Interest and Attitude Inventory

Family, Social, Educational History, and Physical Factors

He wishes that his teacher would let him choose his own desk and sit by her. He feels that he needs extra help with all of his class work. His favorite color is red, he likes hot candy and his favorite drink is fruit punch. He loves to read and his favorite book to read is *The Math Wiz*. He likes this book, because it is fun to read.

The three words that he used to describe himself are handsome, wear glasses (*he has not worn his glasses in two years, because they are broken and his guardian and/or parents do not have any money to get them repaired.*) and stay clean. He loves to count money with his friends and likes to read by himself. He spends a lot of time watching Sponge Bob and Square Pants on

TV. When asked what he would do if he was given \$1,000.00, he said he would buy himself some clothes and shoes.

Part-3 Assessment

Fry's Basic Sight Vocabulary Test

Using the Fry's word list *The Fifth Hundred* participant missed 3 out of 100.

Folktale Words to Know and Define Activity Sheet

During class session, participants were asked to define three words. Participant 7 defined all three words.

My Folktale Reading List Sign-Up Sheet

All stories were read in class.

How Leopard Got His Spots Cloze Passage Activity Sheet

Participant 7-5 got 3 out of 6 answers correct.

Folktale Vocabulary Dictionary Activity Sheet

Fifth grade participants did not have to complete this activity sheet.

Compare and Contrast Map

Fifth grade participants did not have to complete this activity sheet

Paragraph Structure

In blank 1 participant 7-5 stated that the story was about a “girl who wanted to get married to the stranger.” The characters in the story was the “girl and dad” as stated by the participant in blank 2. Blank 3, the participant stated that he learned that one must be “he save his daughter from the serpent.” In blank 4, the participant said the most important point that he learned from the story was that “you have to be brave.”

My Folktale Venn Diagram

Participant 7-5 did not complete this activity, because he was absent from school that day.

Writing Sample

Participant 7-5 needs practice with letter formation using straight lines, curves and oblique lines. This can be taught when he gets extra help with his manuscript and cursive writing. As a fifth grader; he should be writing in cursive, but he is using his manuscript skills. On some of his work, his writing is fair and other activities sheet the writing is poor.

Part 4-Instructional Plan

Fry's Basic Sight Vocabulary Test

Participant 7-5 was able to pronounce 97 words correctly out of 100. It is recommended that the words missed be written on index cards to be practiced at home and school. Participant will need practice in using words missed in sentences and will be able to move to the Fry's Word list- *The Sixth Hundred*.

Participant 7-5 had some difficulties with auditory discrimination and phoneme awareness (spelling). He could not distinguish one phoneme (same or different) sound from another. For example, though-through. It is recommended that participant practice and pronounce words missed again and use the words in sentences to help with auditory discrimination.

In order to correct his phoneme awareness, he must get tutorial help with letters and sounds in words. The teacher or reading specialist can devise a simple spelling test

Folktale Words to Know and Define Activity Sheet

Participant 7-5 has average dictionary and encyclopedia skills. He was able to use the guide words to locate and define his words.

My Folktale Reading List Sign-Up Sheet

Researcher and participant read stories in class. He has poor reading habits. He will need to read books more often that will appeal to him.

How the Leopard Got His Spots Cloze Passage Activity Sheet

Participant 7-5 got 3 out 6 answers correct

Folktale Vocabulary Dictionary Activity Sheet

Fifth grade participant did not have to complete this activity sheet.

Map Your Story

Fifth grade participant did not have to complete this activity sheet.

Compare and Contrast Map

Did not test.

Paragraph Structure

The intent of this activity was to get participant to use the open-ended paragraph structure in order to strengthen their comprehension skills. Participant 7-5 struggled with remembering what happened in the story and writing his responses. He did have a clear understanding of what he had learned from the story.

My Folktale Venn Diagram

Participant 7-5 was absent and did not complete this activity sheet. He will be able to complete it at a later date.

My Folktale

Using the information from the units taught and directions from his folktale activity sheet, participant 7-5 was able to write his own folktale story in his journal. He created his folktale story with traits and characteristics of how he imagined his hero and other characters to be. He started his story with “Once upon a time and ended it with “they live happily ever after.” A very interesting story to read.

My case study with the participants was a rewarding experience that I will always cherish. The children were very cooperative as well as their teachers, parents, administrators, and district level personnel. Over the course of time of running this study, I observed and interacted with the

students and teachers in order to get an idea of their perceptions about folktales. At the end of my study, students were asked the following questions listed below. Their responses are listed next to their participant number.

Research Question Responses

Why do students think folktales have heroes?

P1-2

- So that people will not get hurt.
- So that people do not have to die.
- To solve problems.
- To help families.
- To play tricks on the other characters.
- To give people what they need to survive.

P3-3

- In order for kids not to read the same books over and over.
- To make the stories interesting and to help others.
- Because heroes can prevent bad things from happening before it happens.
- To save the other characters in the story.
- To teach a lesson.
- To prevent danger.

P4-3

- To be wise.
- To be brave.
- To have super strength to do whatever they want to do.

- To have a heart and vision to avoid trouble.
- To be smart.
- To have strong muscles.

P7-5

- To save people lives and the world.
- To fight crime.
- To protect people.
- To find someone they can fool.
- To work hard
- To take care of children.
- To have strong morals and values.
- Because they believe in personification.
- Because folktales are passed on from one generation to another generation.

What are some traits and/or characteristics that students would like for their hero to have?

P1-2

- To be careful.
- To be strong.
- To be brave.

P3-3

- To be strong.
- To have confidence in themselves.
- To protect people and other living things.

P4-3

- To be yourself.
- To be fast.
- To be powerful.

P7-5

- To be brave.
- To be strong.
- To be intelligent.
- To be such a hero.

As participants answered my research questions, it was obvious that the students were able to apply their critical thinking skills to recall, retell, compare, contrast, generalize, and differentiate between a hero and tricksters. This does not mean that they have achieved all of the necessary skills in becoming an avid reader, but it does mean that they have made some improvements. More work will need to be done.

As I promoted a love for reading African- American folktales to participants in this study, their teachers expressed that same love in reading African- American folktales to their students in their classrooms. Teachers were cooperative and provided a brief biographical sketch of themselves and their teaching career. Two of the three teachers asked to participate responded in addition to the reading specialist/librarian/researcher. They are as follows.

T1-2

T1-2 is a (LSU-S) Louisiana State University at Shreveport graduate. She has Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration with a concentration in accounting. T1 earned a certification in elementary education in grades 1-5 through alternate certification program at LSU-S. Teacher 1 has taught at Bayou Elementary school as a second grade classroom teacher for four years. She is now serving as the leading teacher for the other two teachers.

She is the contact person to go to in reference to second grade information regarding the curriculum. Before becoming a classroom teacher, she worked as a branch manager in a parish library. With her calmness, she knows and understand what it means to be teaching struggling readers. The following is her response to the research questions.

How are elementary teachers implementing the use of folktales in the classrooms?

The Great Ball Game and *Lizard and the Sun* are the only folktales included in the current *Story Town* Reading and English, Language Arts curriculum. *The Great Ball Game* has been used in instruction to teach Social Studies lesson focusing on themes such as, teamwork, inclusion, friendship. *Lizard and the Sun* has been utilized to build background knowledge and to learn how to write opinionated composition.

What challenges do elementary teachers face with the implementation of folktales?

The current curriculum includes just two folktales. The teacher must research other resources such as, the school library, the public library, and websites and databases on-line for material and ideas.

How do elementary teachers align their teaching of folktales to the Common Core standards?

Grade 2 teachers align folktales to Common Core State Standards utilizing the following standards.

RL. 2.2. Recount stories, including fables and folktales from diverse cultures, and determining their central message, lesson or moral.

RL 2.5. Describes the overall structure of a story, including describing the beginning which introduces the story (characters and problem) and the ending concludes the action (solution, lesson or moral).

W 2.1 States that students must write opinion pieces in which they introduce the topic or book that they are writing about, state an opinion, supply reasons that support the opinion, use linking words to connect opinion and reasons, and provide a concluding statement or section.

T2-3

T2 has a Bachelor of Science degree in elementary education, a master's degree in education administration, and curriculum/ instruction with emphasis in technology. She has taught regular education and special education for 19 years at Bayou Elementary school. This is the only school she has worked at. T2 has served as a mentor teacher, school leader and presently serving as a student-teacher advisor.

How are elementary teachers implementing the use of folktales in the classrooms?

Folktales are being introduced to students within the curriculum. Reading folktales to students will show them the different genres. Students are exposed to folktales in the reading series.

What challenges do elementary teachers face with the implementation of folktales?

The lack of folktales were limited in the school. The students were only exposed to "Story-Town" stories. Most of the time, I would have to research for folktales stories at the public library which required me to pull the materials. This was time consuming for me.

How do elementary teachers align their teaching of folktales to the Common Core standards?

The aligning of folktales to the Common Core Standards are presented in the 3rd grade Louisiana State Standards curriculum. Teachers must expose students to different kinds of genres.

Researcher, Reading Specialist and Library Media Specialist

The researcher, reading and library media specialist has taught for over 38 years in north Louisiana. She was born and raised in south Louisiana. Thirty-seven of the 38 years were spent

teaching at another school in north Louisiana. She is presently teaching at Bayou school, where she has taught for the last seven months. She has a Bachelor of Science degree in elementary education and a minor degree in library science.

Her master's degree is in guidance and counseling. She received her + 30 certification in administration and supervision. Her 2nd masters is in library and information science with doctoral hours in library and information studies. Last year, she received certification as a reading specialist. Presently, she is working as a library media and reading specialist. Reading books has been her inspiration. Teaching students have been her love. She promotes reading all year long and encourages students to work hard and do their best.

The Researcher, reading and library media specialist understand the time it takes to help a struggling reader to become a fluent reader and/or an avid reader. To read and understand what you have read is her "motto". I have a love for books and children. Books bring "knowledge" to life and children bring "joy" to life.

How are elementary teachers implementing the use of folktales in the classrooms?

It has been somewhat of a struggling for teachers to implement folktales in the classrooms, because teachers were given the state standards first before ever given the curriculum. As of today, they are still trying to get information from on-line resources.

What challenges do elementary teachers face with the implementation of folktales?

The challenges that teachers are faced with is huge. First, limited resources from the district and state common core state standards were not available. Second, teachers must rely on the public library to supply them with the necessary support. And lastly, their school library and classrooms did not have African-American folktales in its collection, but now have it since the unit has been taught.

How do elementary teachers align their teaching of folktales to the Common Core standards?

Teachers, are aligning the teaching of folktales to the (CCSS) Common Core State Standards, by using the CCSS initiative guidelines across the curriculum in English, Language Arts, and Writing standards. Teachers, must comply with the reading and research standards for literature for all grades by utilizing the following core standards:

- RL & R1 (Grade # and Standard #) Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text (refer to details and example in a text) referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.
- W- Writing Standards (Grade # and Standard #) Conduct short research projects that build knowledge about a topic (through investigation of different aspects of a topic.)
- W- Writing Standards (Grade # and Standard #) Recall relevant information from experiences or gather information from print and digital sources; take brief notes on sources and sort evidence into provided categories (provide a list of sources).

Summary

In the *Common Core Curriculum Maps for English/Language Arts* (not purchased by the district), but was written by teachers for teachers maps out a list of units that teachers can teach throughout the year starting from kindergarten through grade 5. It is my recommendation that the State of Louisiana and or the districts make these guidebooks available to all English and Language Arts teachers as quickly as possible.

This book will be a good resource that will guide teachers as they teach their students. If, this guidebook is purchased, it would lessen the burden on teachers in planning and implementing an effective Common Core State Standard African-American unit as well as units on other cultures.

If, we (vendors and book companies) can work together in providing children with as many books as they possibly can have to read at home, in the classroom, on the bus, in the

car, and out on the playground, we would be saving a lot of struggling readers. This is a concern that must be addressed immediately. Children are our world, we need to make changes to our curriculum now. We should not make changes that will affect the political government, but our children. Children should come first in education, not last in education.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION/RESULTS

The use of Accelerated Reader Star Reading Analysis Program, African-Americans folktale books, Common Core State Standards, Fry's Word Lists, Elementary Reading Attitude Survey, journals, research questions, maps, and graphic organizers were crucial documents to use for "*A Qualitative Study Utilizing Non-Fiction African-American Folktales: Process and Product with Struggling Second, Third, and Fifth Graders in North Louisiana.*"

The assessments and findings are evidences that the school, district, state, and federal government must make drastic changes for struggling readers before Common Core Curriculum Standards are fully adopted and implemented. The argument to whether curriculum changes, adoption of the new Common Core English-Language Arts standards, the need for the library collection to be in alignment, and support the curricular needs of the school have been a struggle for administrators, reading and social studies teachers, reading specialists, and library media specialists. Because of the amount of books and other materials that circulate out of the media center into the classrooms, reading teachers and library specialists are being asked to develop their classrooms and library collection in support of the curriculum without truly understanding what the users need.

It is essential for teachers, media center specialists, and administrators to be aware of curriculum changes and the needs of its users in order to provide the necessary services that are needed. The purpose of this study was to explore how three elementary teachers, one reading/ library media specialist along with eight African American students in grades second, third, and fifth grades utilize a variety of nonfiction African American folktale books in their classrooms and the library.

This was a very effective qualitative research study from the results obtained in the findings of this study. Without proof of assessments, folktale books, activities, and other research

documents, it would have been very difficult to prove how teachers, reading/library specialist, and students can use a variety of folktale books to enhance the school's curriculum for life-long readers.

The teachers and reading/library specialist knowledge of the classroom, library and the curriculum substantiated that changes could make a difference in how African-American folktales curriculum is implemented in the Common Core State Standards for struggling readers. The challenges and alignment of the curriculum with Common Core State Standards have robust potentials for becoming an effective and superiority folktale curriculum where the entire school, district, state, and federal level can benefit from this study. A strong Common Core State Standards folktale curriculum can yield exceptional life-long readers instead of life-long strugglers.

The findings from this study do not prove that the Common Core State Standards curriculum and assessments results were the only sources that caused participants to become life-long strugglers and not life-long readers needing evaluation, but they serve as strong variables that the Common Core State Standards curriculum is fragile.

This study served as a model for other teachers, reading and library specialists wanting to develop other content area subjects in their classrooms and the library to support and be aligned with the school's curriculum and Common Core State Standards. An excellent collection of folktale books merged together with an exceptional school curriculum illustrate a need for more collaboration with teachers, reading and library specialists to achieve long range goals and objectives for academic success of all students.

We must not lose our focus on just trying to educate the fluent readers, but all readers. During the last seven months of this school year, I had the opportunity to work in a school that is rated as D school according to the Louisiana State Department of Education. The year before it

was rated as an F school. This drastic change in my teaching career was an eye opener, because I have always been part of an A school. Due to this change, it has caused me to reevaluate my thoughts as to why we have schools, teachers, administrators, and elected officials. We must see exactly what needs to be done and do it immediately, or we lose our value commodity-our children.

Using my experience as an educator of over 36 years of teaching in elementary grades, library, reading specialist, and intensive training as an administrator I had to quickly refocus myself as to what I had before me. These were children that all that want in life is to read and be able to read and comprehend of what they were asked to do. With less than 10% of children be able to read fluently at the school, I had to consider their needs as well as the other 90% of struggling readers. This was a task and a challenge to apply what I had been taught to do during my teaching career and training.

During these several months of teaching, I discovered that all children want and can learn how to read, but must be taught at a different pace. We must continue as educators to take big leaps forward and not backwards when it comes to teaching children to read. I once read an article written by Marling-Dudley. The title of her article was *Struggling Readers in the Regular Classroom: A Personal Reflection*. Basically the article summarized the different approaches she used to teach struggling students.

Marling-Dudley (1994) stated that there are three versions to teach struggling readers; “the first is that special learners require qualitatively different sorts of instruction, the second is that multiple perspectives and approaches will be necessary to accommodate the needs of children who possess differences in abilities and learning histories, and the third version of instruction for struggling students states that there are models of literacy learning which best describes the reading and writing development of all children such as, universal language learning principles

from which instructional practices derive (p. 466).” The literacy model that the researcher and teachers used to teach struggling students about African-American folktales are as follows:

During this dissertation study titled “*A Qualitative Study Utilizing Non-Fiction African-American Folktales: Process and Product with Struggling Second, Third, and Fifth Graders in North Louisiana*” has been a rewarding experience for several reasons based on my research findings. Those reasons are that during this study, it has given me the opportunity to learn more about African-American culture and folktales and to be able to teach what I discovered to African-American children.

Dudley-Marling (1994) contends that there is a “strong relationship between being read to and reading development, because students’ reading vocabulary, comprehension, reading interests, and oral language may all be affected by being read to (p. 469). In this study teachers, participants and the researcher have read books by well-known folktale authors told, retold and completed activities to enhance participants knowledge base of being able to:

- improve and develop their critical thinking skills through the use of analogies
- compare and contrast stories and characters
- learn about various elements in a story
- summarize stories
- listen, read and respond to questions from stories
- understand the main idea of stories through the utilization of topics
- use context clues to complete cloze passages

By integrating these skills, participants have learned to use graphic organizers such as, learning and defining words that are associated with the unit, signing-up for folktale books to read, paragraph structure, and using a Venn diagram. Folktale stories have played a major role in the life of the participants during these three weeks. Students’ abilities to learn,

understand, and apply have increased in several ways when incorporating several different skills.

The skills are as follows:

- listening
- reading comprehension
- visual memory
- visual motor
- vocabulary
- problem solving
- language (verbal and written)
- communication (verbal and written)

It is not an easy task to teach struggling readers how to listen and complete activities, if they do not have knowledge of what the task is requiring them to do or what it is asking of them. Children must be taught at an early age how to read and be able to comprehend what they have read. A good way to build children's comprehension skills is to use discussion. Alvermann, Dillion, and O'Brien (1987) contend that "discussion is important both as a communication skill and as a means for developing higher level reading skills (p. 1)."

According to Alvermann, Dillion, and O'Brien (1987) as defined by Bloom that describes discussion as a "cooperative attack on a common set of problems, based on a common set of data, materials, and experiences, in which the problem is pursued to as complex and deep a level as possible (p. 1). " Listening, visual, and vocabulary skills are important as Louisiana moves into the Common Core State Standard Era for reading success.

In today's era, students are required to comprehend and write with understanding and accuracy. Johnston (1983) claims that "reading comprehension is viewed as the process of using the cues provided by the author and one's prior knowledge to infer the author's intended

meaning (p. 9).” Some of the participants in this study was able to use the author’s cues in their read and respond activities.

With direct instruction and special reinforcement if the necessary skills are taught to children, they will be able to perform and produce excellent work. These skills must be taught to children at an early age in order to reinforce knowledge that they will learn now and prior knowledge of what they have been taught. We cannot leave children behind. Children are our future and their weakness must be addressed now.

As Dudley-Marling (1994) discussed how important it is to teach children about literacy. Tompkins (2010) discussed various ways of how teacher can teach literacy to children, while at the same time understanding how children process information. She listed the following learning theories (p. 6):”

- Behaviorism (teacher-centered) views the teacher’s role as providing information and supervising practice.
- Constructivism (student-centered) recognizes the importance of background knowledge.
- Sociolinguistics (student-centered) explains that students learn best through authentic activities.
- Cognitive/Information Processing (student-centered) recommends reading and writing as meaning-making processes.

Students have to be motivated to learn in order to process information and become successful learners and be able to comprehend what they have learned. Teachers in this study were motivated to teach the folktale unit, so were the participants ready to listen and learn. We must not forget about our literacy television and Internet home viewers. In the 21st century, teachers are having to compete with television and the Internet serving as babysitters of our children.

As educators, we must provide children suggestions of site and activities to enhance their learning at home and at school. We must also provide children with one-on-one tutorial services instead of large group tutorial services such as, utilizing reading specialist doctoral students in a tutorial program similar to *The Howard Street Tutoring Model*, but struggling readers would be tutored in their neighborhood schools or a vacant house or building owned by the school district or the city.

According to Morrow and Woo (2001) the program was organized for low-achieving public school students that would walk over to a small community center on Howard Street two afternoons per week to receive tutorial services for 90 minutes (p. 179).” The tutors would use a similar model lessons as *The Howard Street Tutoring Group* used upon implementation. The group used the following lesson plan activities (p. 182):”

1. Guiding reading at the child’s instructional level (18 minutes). Tutors would support the child in reading and comprehension through well-written stories. A beginning reader will “echo-read” simple patterns books; a mid-first grade reader will “partner-read,” or alternately read with the tutor, pages of a basal story or trade book; and a late first-grade (or higher-level) reader will read independently, requiring only incidental support from the tutor.
2. Word study (10 minutes). Word categorization activities and games are used to help children internalize basic spelling patterns such as, sorting beginning consonant elements, short-vowel word families (rhyming words), or vowel patterns.
3. Easy reading (10 minutes). This reading is done in trade books in order to build sight vocabulary, to increase fluency, and to strengthen the child’s confidence as a reader.

4. Read to the child (7 minutes). At the end of each lesson, the tutor reads a high-quality selection to the child. This may be a fairy tale, a fable, a short picture book, or a chapter from a longer book.

By doing this study in the classrooms and the library provided the teachers, reading/ library specialist with a better understanding of folktales and the curriculum of the school. This study serves as the groundwork for more studies on this topic and other cultures. The researcher will continue to enhance students' knowledge of African-American folktales as well as folktales dealing with other cultures such as, Native-Americans, Latinos, Asian, Jewish, and Middle-Eastern cultures. This is a must to do in order to be in compliance and aligned with the District's and Common Core State Standards.

Future Study

The folktale collection on various cultures will continue to be assessed in the classrooms and the library to ensure that the mission statement of the school is accomplished. For future study, the researcher is recommended two topics to be considered. The first is to do a collection analysis overview in the classrooms and the library in order to assess the needs of the school for the next multicultural units. The second recommendation would be to incorporate fourth graders in the next study.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1- Child Assent Voluntary Permission Form

CHILD ASSENT VOLUNTARY PERMISSION FORM

I, _____, agree to participate in this research study entitled “A Qualitative Study Utilizing Non-Fiction African-American Folktales: Process and Product with Struggling Second, Third, and Fifth Graders in North Louisiana.” Participating in this research study will require me to be assessed on my reading abilities, read some books, be read to, and complete several activities for my teacher and the researcher.

By participating in this research study I will be required to follow all rules and regulations put forth by my teacher and the researcher. Since the study is based on voluntary permission I will not be required to participate, if I choose not to do so.

***Participant’s Signature:** _____ **Age:** _____ **Date:** _____

Witness: _____ **Date:** _____

***Denotes minor participant.**

STUDY EXEMPTED BY:

Dr. Robert C. Mathews, Chairman
Institutional Review Board
Louisiana State University
130 David Boyd Hall
225-578-8692 / www.lsu.edu/irb

Exemption Expires: 3/13/2017

The study has been discussed with me and all my questions have been answered. I may direct additional questions regarding study specifics to the researcher. If I have questions about participants' rights or other concerns, I can contact **Robert C. Mathews, Chairman, Institutional Review Board**, (225) 758-8692, irb@lsu.edu, www.lsu.edu/irb. I agree to participate in the study described above and acknowledge the investigator's obligation to provide me with a signed copy of this consent form.

Subject's Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

STUDY EXEMPTED BY:

Dr. Robert C. Mathews, Chairman
Institutional Review Board
Louisiana State University
130 David Boyd Hall
225-578-8692 / www.lsu.edu/irb

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Exemption Expires: 3/13/2017

Appendix 2- Fry's Word List

Participant's Code #: _____

Date: _____

FRY'S WORD LIST

The Second Hundred

over	say	set	try
new	great	put	kind
sound	where	end	hand
take	help	does	picture
only	through	another	again
little	much	well	change
work	before	large	off
know	line	must	play
place	right	big	spell
years	too	even	air
live	means	such	away
me	old	because	animal
back	any	turn	house
give	same	here	point
most	tell	why	page
very	boy	ask	letter
after	follow	went	mother
things	came	men	answer
our	want	read	found
just	show	need	study
name	also	land	still
good	around	different	learn
sentence	form	home	should
man	three	us	America
think	small	move	world

Appendix 3- Fry's Word List

Participant's Code #: _____

Date: _____

FRY'S WORD LIST

The Third Hundred

high	saw	important	miss
every	left	until	idea
near	don't	children	enough
add	few	side	eat
food	while	feet	face
between	along	car	watch
own	might	mile	far
below	close	night	Indian
country	something	walk	real
plant	seem	white	almost
last	next	sea	let
school	hard	began	above
father	open	grow	girl
keep	example	took	sometimes
tree	begin	river	mountains
never	life	four	cut
start	always	carry	young
city	those	state	talk
earth	both	once	soon
eyes	paper	book	list
light	together	hear	song
thought	got	stop	being
head	group	without	leave
under	often	second	family
story	run	late	it's

Appendix 4- Fry's Word List

Participant's Code #: _____

Date: _____

FRY'S WORD LIST

The Fifth Hundred

done	decided	plane	filled
English	contain	system	heat
road	course	behind	full
half	surface	ran	hot
ten	produce	round	check
fly	building	boat	object
gave	ocean	game	am
box	class	force	rule
finally	note	brought	among
wait	nothing	understand	noun
correct	rest	warm	power
oh	carefully	common	cannot
quickly	scientists	bring	able
person	inside	explain	six
became	wheels	dry	size
shown	stay	though	dark
minutes	green	language	ball
strong	known	shape	material
verb	island	deep	special
stars	week	thousands	heavy
front	less	yes	fine
feel	machine	clear	pair
fact	base	equation	circle
inches	ago	yet	include
street	stood	government	built

Appendix 5- Elementary Reading Attitude Survey Scoring Sheet

Elementary Reading Attitude Survey Scoring Sheet

Participant's Name _____ Grade _____

Teacher _____ Administration Date _____

Scoring Guide

4 points	Happiest Garfield
3 points	Slightly Smiling Garfield
2 points	Mildly Upset Garfield
1 point	Very Upset Garfield

Recreational Reading

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Academic Reading

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Raw Score: _____

Raw Score: _____

Full scale raw score: _____ (Recreational + Academic): _____

Percentile ranks: _____ Recreational _____

Academic _____

Full scale _____

Adapted from: PAWS-www.professorgarfield.org

Survey designed by Dennis J. Kear, Wichita State University

Elementary Reading Attitude Survey

School _____ Grade _____ Name _____

Please circle the picture that describes how you feel when you read a book.

1. How do you feel when you read a book on a rainy Saturday?



2. How do you feel when you read a book in school during free time?



3. How do you feel about reading for fun at home?



4. How do you feel about getting a book for a present?



Please circle the picture that describes how you feel when you read a book.

5. How do you feel about spending free time reading a book?



6. How do you feel about starting a new book?



7. How do you feel about reading during summer vacation?



8. How do you feel about reading instead of playing?



Please circle the picture that describes how you feel when you read a book.

9. How do you feel about going to a bookstore?



10. How do you feel about reading different kinds of books?



11. How do you feel when a teacher asks you questions about what you read?



12. How do you feel about reading workbook pages and worksheets?



Please circle the picture that describes how you feel when you read a book.

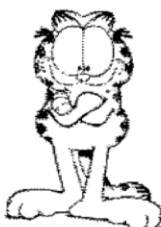
13.

How do you feel about reading in school?



14.

How do you feel about reading your school books?



15.

How do you feel about learning from a book?



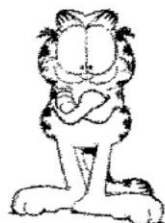
16.

How do you feel when it's time for reading in class?

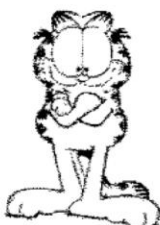


Please circle the picture that describes how you feel when you read a book.

17. How do you feel about stories you read in reading class?



18. How do you feel when you read out loud in class?



19. How do you feel about using a dictionary?



20. How do you feel about taking a reading test?



Appendix 6- Folktale Words to Know and Define

Participate Code # _____

FOLKTALE WORDS TO KNOW AND DEFINE

Directions- Please use a dictionary or/an encyclopedia to define the following words.

- African-Americans-

- Folktale-

- Storyteller-

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Appendix 7- My Folktale Reading List

Participant's Code#: _____
Date: _____

MY FOLKTALE READING LIST	
• TITLE OF BOOK	AUTHOR
• _____	_____
• _____	_____
• _____	_____

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Appendix 8- How Leopard Got His Spots

Participant's Code #: _____

Date: _____

HOW LEOPARD GOT HIS SPOTS

One African _____ tells how Leopard got his spots. Leopard and some other animals had a funeral march for their friend Ant. As the animals walked, Leopard's stomach _____. He was hungry!

Passing a farm, Leopard noticed some baskets filled with fresh eggs. First, he tossed one egg into his mouth. Soon, he had eaten an _____ basket! The farmer saw the empty basket. "Who stole my eggs?" he asked. They all denied it.

The farmer had an idea. He asked all the animals to jump over a _____. He said the animal who had eaten the eggs would fall in. Each animal _____ over the flames. When it was Leopard's turn, he took a deep breath, jumped, and landed in the fire. "Aha!" said the farmer. "It was you!" Leopard climbed out of the fire, but his coat was _____ in spots as a reminder of his greed.

Source: Adapted from *Scholastic Quick Cloze Passages for Boosting Comprehension*

egg/En 214

Word List

bonfire
Entire
Folktale
Leaped
Rumbled
Scorched

Appendix 9- My Biographical Sketch

Participant Code #:

MY BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Directions-Please provide me with a brief biographical sketch of yourself and your teaching career.

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Appendix 10- Letter to Parents

March 17, 2014

Dear Parents:

At school or at home, your child is reading non-fiction books on African-American folktales, having the theme of *Multiculturalism*. The books are as follows:

- *Aboyoyo* by Pete Seeger
- *Anansi and the Talking Melon* retold by Eric A. Kimmel
- *The Orphan Girl and Other Stories: West African Folk Tales* retold by Buchi Offodile
- *Nelson Mandela's Favorite African Folktales* by Nelson Mandela
- *A Story A Story: An African Tale* retold by Gail E. Haley
- *Tales from West Africa* retold by Martin Bennett
- *Who's in Rabbit's House* by Verna Aardema
- *Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears* by Verna Aardema
- *The Village of Round and Square Houses* by Ann Grifalconi

Each of the above books deals in some way with African-American folktales. In the library and classrooms, we are studying customs and traditions of people in Africa as well as in our own. We are discovering how people around the world are alike and different in the ways they live.

There are several ways you can help enrich your child's experience with this theme unit. **First**, ask your child about the books he or she has been reading. Discover what your child likes most about each one. Ask about new vocabulary words your child has learned. Even encourage your child to read parts of the books to you!

Second, talk about other countries where your family may have emigrated from or where relatives still live. Discuss how ways of life there are similar to or different from those in the United States. Retell the story of how you or your earlier relatives traveled from another country to America or how you once visited a foreign country.

If you have a world map or globe at home, help your child locate different countries on it. Measure distances between your home and other places. Discuss ways that the land or the climate may be different from that of the United States.

Finally, discuss the importance of respect for other peoples and cultures. Talk about ways we can deal with our differences in a constructive fashion. Have your child suggest ways we might learn from and help people whose background is different from our own. Thank you for helping to make this theme unit a meaningful one for your child.

Sincerely,

Gail G. Griffin

Library Media Specialist and Doctoral Candidate for PhD

Source: Adapted from *Big Themes-Unit Management Guide Multiculturalism (in parts)* by Sundance Publishers & Distributors.

Appendix 11- Reasons to Read

Reasons to Read

- Spark creativity
- Inspire imagination
- Enrich communication
- Discover new information
- Explore the world
- Form new ideas
- Be in the know
- Build your brain
- Travel through time

Source: Adapted from *Trend Enterprises, Inc.*

Appendix 12- Independent Reading

Independent Reading

- Select a “just right” book to read by yourself
- Select a quiet place to read
- Read during the designated time
- Read silently
- Concentrate on what you are reading
- Read for at least 30 minutes
- Record your reading progress

Source: Adapted from *Unknown* source

Appendix 13- To Understand What You Read

TO UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU READ.....

Identify cause and effect

- What is happening and why?

Find the main idea

- What is the key concept of what you are reading?

Look for supporting details

- Which information you have read helps you better understand the main idea?

Make connection

- Does what you are reading remind you of anything you already know?

Think about the author's purpose

- Why did the author write this?

Use context clues

- How does other information in a sentence or paragraph provide clues about unknown word or phrase?

Make predictions

- What do you think may happen next?

Visualize

- How do what you have read, what else is probably true?

Distinguish facts from opinions

- Which ideas are true and which are the writer's view?

Source: Unknown

Appendix 14- Good Readers Focus on Text Structure

GOOD READERS FOCUS ON TEXT STRUCTURE

Problem/Solution

- The author identifies a problem, gives possible solutions with possible results, and describes the solution that was finally chosen.

Cause/Effect

- The author describes several reasons why an even occurred or describes several effects from one cause, or the author describes a single cause/effect situation.

Descriptive

- The author describes the topic by listing characteristics, features, and examples.

Sequence

- The structure describes a series of events in numerical or chronological order that lead up to a conclusion. Events can be separated by years or just by a few seconds.

Compare and Contrast

- The author describes how two or more events, places, things or ideas are alike and/or different.

Source: Unknown

Appendix 15- Bloom's Taxonomy

The Big Six

1. Evaluation

Compare
Criticize
Critique
Relate

2. Synthesis

Add to
Combine
Construct
Design
Develop
Formulate
Hypothesize
Produce
Organize

3. Analysis

Analyze
Classify
Compare/Contrast
Examine
Distinguish
Infer
Investigate
Separate
Select
Survey
Take apart

4. Application

Apply
Change
Choose
Discover
Dramatize
Model
Prepare
Produce
Report
Show
Sketch

5. **Comprehension**

Change
Compare
Confirm
Defend
Distinguish
Explain
Express
Extend
Generalize
Illustrate
Infer
Predict
Restate
Summarize
Transform

6. **Knowledge**

Define
Describe
Draw
Identify
Label
Locate
Memorize
Name
Recall
Recite
Recognize
Remember
Select
State
Write

Source: Adapted from *Top Notch Teacher Product, Inc.*

Appendix 16- Paragraph Structure

PARAGRAPH STRUCTURE

Title of Book _____

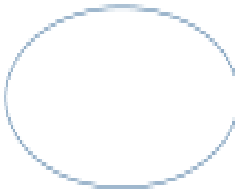
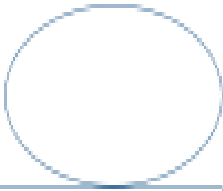
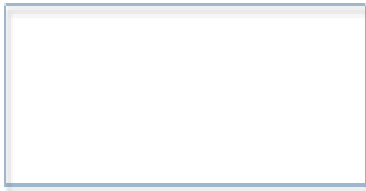

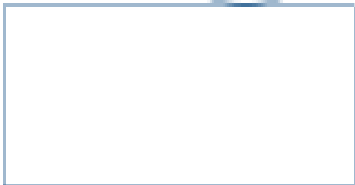



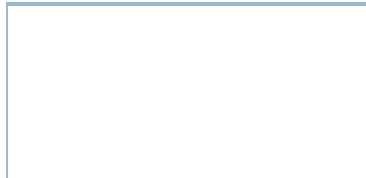

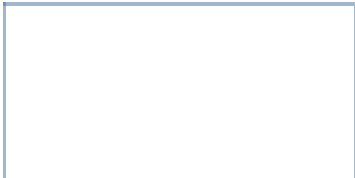
Your Name _____

Directions: Using this example, complete this paragraph structure sheet.

The story was about _____
_____. The characters were _____
_____. I learned that one must
be _____. The most
important point that I learned from the story is _____
_____.

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Appendix 17- Compare and Contrast Map

COMPARE AND CONTRAST MAP		
	Title of Book _____ Your Name _____ Directions: Compare and contrast your story using this example sheet.	
		
		
		

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Appendix 18- Map Your Story

MAP YOUR STORY

Title of Book _____

Your Name _____

Directions: Map out your story using this example sheet.

Story Setting-

Characters/Hero

Beginning of the story-

Middle of the story-

Ending of the story-

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Appendix 19- My Folktale

MY FOLKTALE

Directions: Using the instructions provided by your teacher and the example below, please write your own folktale.

1. **Select your topic-**Review your notes from the stories you have read or stories read to you.
2. **Research your character-** Use any materials/books that you have on your character. You must decide on the characteristics or traits that you want your character to have.
3. **Design a story map (or you may use the map provided by your teacher)-** Your map must have the following parts:
 - Setting-** Explain when (time) and where (place) did the story take place.
 - Characters (hero)-** Describe the main characters and tell something about each character.
 - Problem-** What problem did the main character or hero had?
 - Events/Climax-** List the events that occurred in the story.
 - Solution or Resolution-** Briefly explain how the hero solved the problem. In other words, explain how the story ended.
4. **Now you are ready to write your first draft!** Use complete sentences with powerful verbs and adjectives. Have a beginning, middle and ending.
5. **Review, edit, and/or revise your folktale-** Check your grammar and punctuation,
6. **Proofread your draft.** Make sure that your writing is your work. **Now publish it. Good luck!**

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Title of Folktale _____

Your Name _____

[illegible]

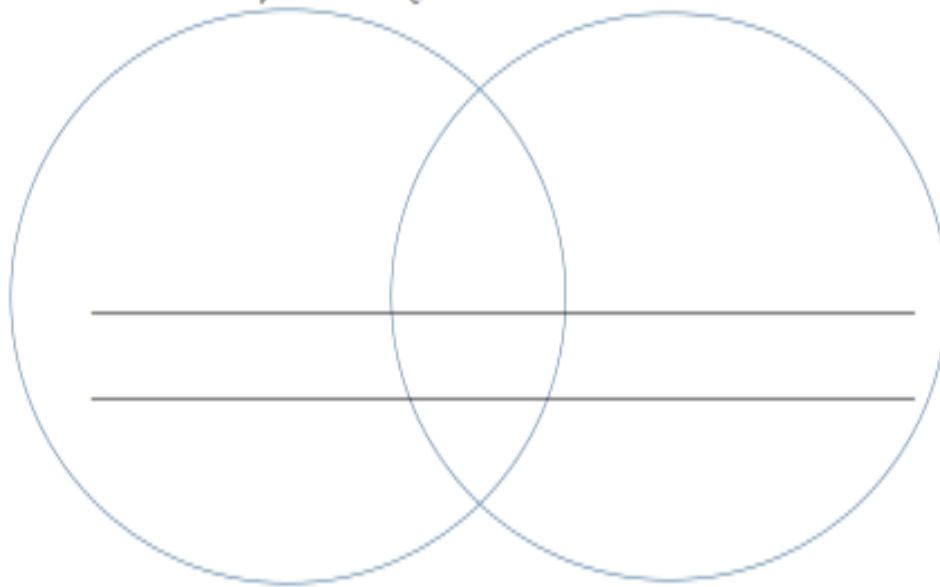
Appendix 20- My Folktale Venn Diagram

MY FOLKTALE VENN DIAGRAM

Title of Book _____

Your Name _____

Directions: Choose two words to complete your Venn diagram. Then write one contrasting and comparison sentence on the lines below your Venn diagram.



My contrasting sentence:

_____.

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My comparison sentence.

_____.

Appendix 21- Folktale Vocabulary Dictionary

FOLKTALE VOCABULARY DICTIONARY

Title of Book _____

Your Name _____

Directions: Read one folktale and write two difficult words below. Using your dictionary, define each word. Now compare your words with another student. Do you and the other student have the same words listed?

Name of folktale: _____

Word

Definition

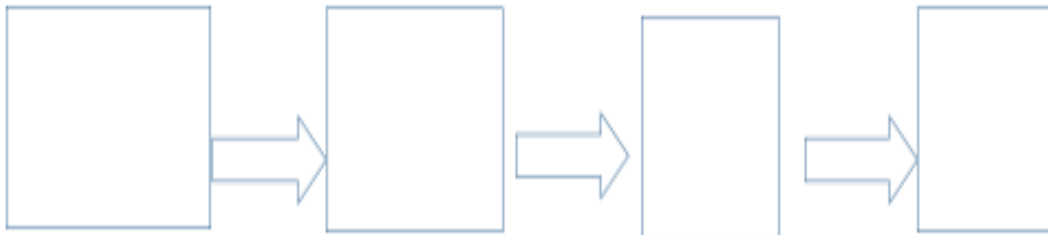
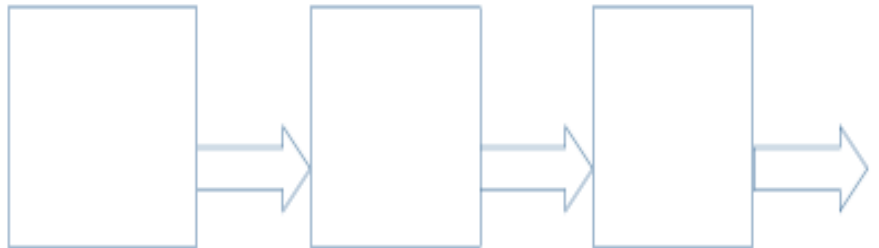
Appendix 22- Link Reaction

Participant's Code #: _____

LINK REACTION

Directions- Link your reaction to the story that you read.

- _____
- _____
- _____



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Appendix 23- KWL

Participant's Code #: _____

KWL

Directions-Tell what you know, what you want to know, and what your learned from the story.

What I Know

What I Want to Know

What I Learned

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Appendix 24- My Folktale Time Line

Participant's Code #: _____

MY FOLKTALE TIME LINE

Directions- Chart your folktale time line.

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Appendix 25-Story Quartering

Participant's Code #: _____

STORY QUARTERING

Directions- Draw a picture of your favorite part of the story and write a sentence describing it.

Sentence- _____

Directions- Write a paragraph summarizing the story.

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Appendix 26- Graphing the Folktale

Participant's Code _____			
GRAPHING THE FOLKTALE CHARACTERS			
• Mark an X in the appropriate box below to graph the qualities of the main characters from two folktales.			
• Title of Folktale: #1 _____		Title of Folktale: #2 _____	
• Character: _____		Character: _____	
• Good Character:		Good Character:	
•			
• or	<input type="checkbox"/>	or	<input type="checkbox"/>
•			
• Bad Character:		Bad Character:	
	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>

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Appendix 27- Six Traits of Writing

SIX TRAITS OF WRITING

Objectives:

- Students will use the following six traits below to compile their writing.

1. Sentence Fluency

- Use complete sentences
- Writing should be easy to read aloud
- Use smooth transitions
- Sentences should have rhythm

2. Organizations

- Gather information
- Link ideas together
- Have a strong lead
- Guide your reader

3. Ideas and Content

- Narrow your topic.
- Write from experiences.
- Use details.
- Brainstorm ideas

4. Conventions

- Check punctuation.
- Follow grammar rules.
- Look up words for spelling and meaning

- Hunt down errors.

5. Voice

- Write about something you care about.
- Make your writing sparkle.
- Connect with your readers
- Be an expert

6. Word Choice

- Use interesting adjectives.
- Use powerful verbs.
- Help create a mental picture.
- Avoid repeating yourself.

Source: *Six Traits of Writing (Bulletin Board Packet)* by G & C Specialty Brands, LLC

Appendix 28- Map of Africa

Appendix 29- World Continents

Unit Management

Map of Africa

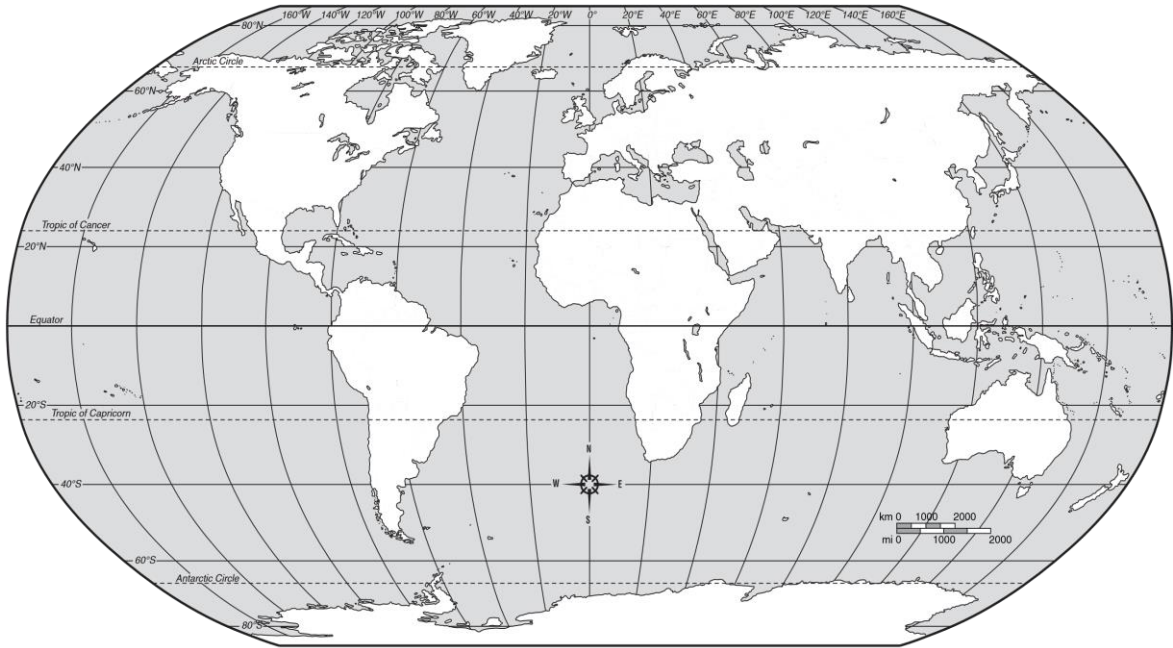


#230 Thematic Unit—Multicultural Folk Tales

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World Continents

Outline Maps
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Appendix 30- What is a Folktale?

What Is a Folktale?

A folktale is a story or legend handed down from generation to generation usually by oral retelling. Folktales often explain something that happens in nature or convey a certain truth about life. The following elements are often found in most folktales:

- The beginning of the story starts with “Once upon a time...” or a similar phrase.
- Magic events, characters, and objects are part of the story.
- One character is someone of royalty (king, queen, prince, princess, etc.).
- One character is wicked.
- One character is good.
- Goodness is rewarded in the story.
- Certain number like three and seven are in the story (three eggs, seven sisters, etc).
- The story ends with “...they lived happily ever after.”

Identify the elements of each folktale you read in the spaces below. Write specific examples.

Folktale Record Sheet

Name of Folktale: _____

Story beginning: _____

Magic: _____

Royalty: _____

Wicked character (s): _____

Good character (s): _____

Goodness rewarded: _____ Numbers in the story (3 or 7): _____

Story ending: _____

Source : Adapted from *Thematic Unit- Multicultural Folktales*, Teacher Created Materials, Inc.

Appendix 31- Folktale Origins

Participant's Code_____

Folktale Origins

As you read African-American folktales, fill out a slip below for each story and attach it to your world map. Connect the slip to the place on the world map where the folk tale originated.

Story Title:_____

Origin:_____

Read by:_____

Story Title:_____

Origin:_____

Read by:_____

Story Title:_____

Origin:_____

Read by:_____

Story Title:_____

Origin:_____

Read by:_____

Story Title:_____

Origin:_____

Read by:_____

Source: Adapted from *Thematic Unit- Multicultural Folktales*, Teacher Created Materials, Inc.

Appendix 32- African American Folktales Lesson Plan

Instruction and Modeling

Creator: Researcher and/or teachers

Subjects: English, Language Arts and Social Sciences

Duration: Forty-Five Minutes

Grade Levels:

- Second, Third, and Fifth Graders

Genre: Folktales

Culture: African American

Goals:

- To expose subjects to African American folktales that include trickster tales

Essential Questions:

- Are available from teachers and researcher for individual title

Standards:

- Classrooms and Library Standards 1, 2, 3, 5, and 8
ELA (English and Language Arts) 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5

Activate Prior Knowledge:

- Share with a classmate your response journal writing of how you played a humorous trick on someone or having one played on you.

Vocabulary Development:

- Students will use a graphic organizer to identify new vocabulary words, as they read the stories.
- Review words on Word Wall or Word Box and their meanings.

Active Literacy:

- Students will select another story to read silently in small groups or pairs. Students will read orally in small groups or pairs.
- Small group will summarize their folktales for the large group.

Discussion Questions:

- How would you adapt this folktale to create a different outcome for the story?
- What is the relationship between the character and the other main characters?

Reflection:

- Students will write in their journal which folktales they enjoyed the most and why.

Outside Reading Assignment:

- Students will continue reading other folktales they would like to share with the class

Materials:

Genre: Folktales

Culture: African Americans

Title of Folktales Selected

- Week 1- Second Graders

Example: *Anansi does the Impossible* by McDermont

Question: What did Anansi do?

- Week 2- Third Graders

Example: *Who's in Rabbit's House* by Aardema

Question: Who was in Rabbit's house and how did they get out?

- Week 3- Fifth Graders

Example: *The Orphan Boy* by Mollel

Questions:

- Who was the Orphan Boy?
- How was he magical?
- Why did he leave?

Description:

- Define folktales
- Discuss oral stories and storytelling
- Discuss character (s)
- Ask students to listen carefully and answer questions at the conclusion of the story being read.

Differentiation:

- Teacher and reading/library media specialist will create or design an activity related to that particular story.

Example 1: Create a storyteller's hat with the characters from the stories that will be read and the storyteller will wear it as she reads the stories each week.

- Example 2:

Design and decorate story characters and display in the classrooms and library

- Example 3:

Copy story characters, have students create their own storyteller's hat, and finally, students can add few characters each week that correlate with the story that was told that day.

Assessment: Students will be able to retell the story and answer the essential questions provided by their teachers and the researcher.

Appendix 33- Anansi does the Impossible by Verna Aardema

Goals/Objectives

- Students will understand that Africa has folktales similar and dissimilar to ones they know.
- Students will understand that the commonalities across all folktales.
- Students will understand that the Ashanti folktales are rooted in the Ashanti history.
- Students will know how to compare two Ashanti folktales.

Standards

- Literacy: R1.4.1. Students will be able to refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says and when drawing inferences from the text.
- Literacy: R1. 4.9. Students will begin the process of integrating information from two texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably.

Material and Preparation

- Anansi does the Impossible by Verna Aardema
- Promethean board so that students can record unfamiliar vocabulary, new ideas, and interesting facts.

Classroom Arrangement and Management Issues

- This lesson will be taught on the carpet, where students are accustomed to having shared reading lessons each day.
- I have chosen this location and these routines because they have been effective for the students and lead teacher thus far.

Plan

Hook (10 minutes)

- I will ask students to recap the previous folktale that was read (Anansi the Spider).
- I will tell them that we are going to read another story about Anansi and to think about ways this story is similar and dissimilar to the previous story.

The body of the lesson

- I will read out-loud (20 minutes)

Note: I will be stopping at pre-determined passages to ask students what stands out to them, what surprises them, etc.

Assessment of the Goals/Objectives Listed Above

- Students will be assessed based on their recorded observations.
 - Because the content of this lesson has never been explicitly taught before, I will not assess students based on what information they find most interesting or are most baffled by, but rather on the extent to which they are able to accurately record what they find.
- Students will be assessed on their participation in class discussion.
 - My primary concern, with regard to this portion of the assessment, is their willingness to share voluntarily. Students should always have their hands raised to share after being asked to do a thin-pair-share or discuss something in small groups.

Anticipating Student's Response

Management Issues

- I do not anticipate time management issues, as I will be reading and determining how many questions to ask at each designated stopping point. I believe that this is plenty of time, but if necessary we will cut discussion short. After the first periods, I will re-

assess my plan, and if necessary, select pages to skip as the text is written in vignettes.

Response to Content of the Lesson

- Some students may struggle with gathering the meaning, or moral, or the folktale. In this instance, they will be asked to think of valuable lessons they have learned in their life. They will then be asked to think of a way this story could be try to teach a similar lesson.

Accommodations

Accommodations for students who may find the material too challenging

- In this lesson, students are simply being asked to discuss what they find interesting, compelling, baffling, etc. about reading.

I do not intend to tell anyone that they are ‘wrong.’ Instead I will push them to share why they feel the way they do, and how they think it might connect to other things we have read.

- If a student is truly struggling with this exercise, I will ask them to think about our unit on the Amish and attempt to relate their specific struggle to some aspect of that project.
- For students who do not speak up, or volunteer their opinions, they will be called on at random.

Accommodations for students who may need a greater challenge and/or finish early

- Given that this lesson is a shared reading, it will not be possible for students to “finish early.”

- Students who require a greater challenge will be asked to think of self-to-text connections.

Source: Stefanie Fleenor

Appendix 34- Formative Self-Evaluation

Independent Reading

Participant's Code#: _____

Evaluation Period: from _____ to _____

1. How much have you read over period?
2. What kinds (s) of books (s) have you been reading?
3. How do you feel about the amount and type of reading you have been doing? Please check one line and comment on why you feel that way.

Satisfied _____ Somewhat Satisfied _____ Dissatisfied _____

4. How do you feel about the kinds of responses you have been making to your reading?
Please check one line and comment on why you feel that way.

Satisfied _____ Somewhat Satisfied _____ Dissatisfied _____

5. What goals (s) do you think you should set for your future reading?

Source: Adapted from *Response Journal* by Les Parson

Appendix 35- Summative Evaluation Based on Stated Criteria

MARKING RESPONSE JOURNALS

Participant's Code #: _____

Evaluation Period: from _____ to _____

1. Independent (Individual) Reading

	Complete				Incomplete	
• Keeps daily records	5	4	3	2	1	0
	Beyond Requirements				Insufficient	
• Reads sufficient amount	5	4	3	2	1	0
	Often				Never	
• Varies responses	5	4	3	2	1	0

2. Small-Groups Discussions

	Always				Never	
• Describes role objectively and thoroughly	5	4	3	2	1	0
	Often				Never	
• Reviews past discussions and attempts to improve skills	5	4	3	2	1	0

3. In General

	Often				Never	
• Looks back at, reflects on, and builds on previous Entries	15	12	9	6	3	0

Mark _____/50 points

Comments:

Source: Adapted from *Response Journal* by Les Parsons

Appendix 36- Final Defense Power Point Presentation Overview

A Qualitative Study Utilizing African-American Folktales: Process and Product with Struggling Second, Third and Fifth Graders in North Louisiana



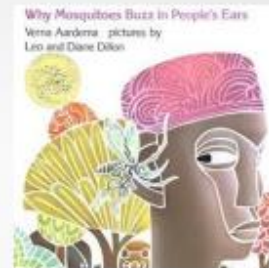
Gail Guidry Griffin
Doctoral Candidate for PhD
Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge
Thursday, June 5, 2014
1:00 p.m.

Chapter 1: Introduction Overview



- Students can learn how to appreciate each other's values, morals, and religious beliefs through multicultural education.
- Multicultural education is an "approach to teaching that is based upon democratic values and beliefs according to Bennett (2001).

- When students learn about multicultural education, they learn about cultural diversity.
- Diller (2007) states that cultural diversity is an “array of differences among groups of people with definable and unique cultural backgrounds.




What makes an ethnic group?

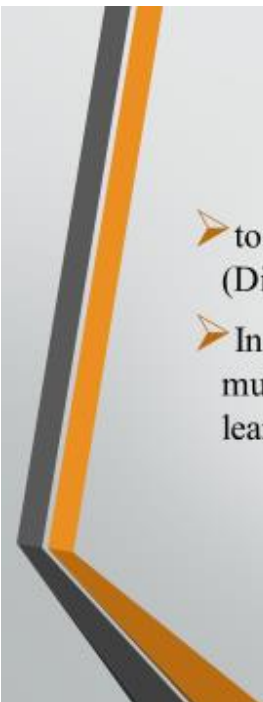
- People having things in common such as race, language, culture, and religion.
- When students are exposed to different ethnic groups, they learn about other cultures that they would not normally know about.





- For example, students being in the same culture from elementary, middle and high school may not have the necessary social skills needed to prepare them for the real world, if they attend college.


- The definable and unique cultural background that the researcher has selected for this study is the African-American ethnic group.
- Diller (2007) defines ethnic group as a “distinguishable people whose members share a common culture and see themselves as separate and different from the majority culture.


- 
- It is imperative that we learn from each other in order to grow and make the world a better place to live in.
 - We can learn about each other through their culture.
 - Culture is defined as “combining traditional ideas and related values, and it is the product of actions, it is learned, shared, and transmitted from one generation.

- 
- to the next, and it organizes life and helps interpret existences (Diller, 2007).
 - In order for students to learn about their existence, their teachers must develop a multicultural curriculum that supports the need to learn about other cultures.

- 
- Teachers can develop a multicultural curriculum by using the (CCSS) Common Core State Standard guidelines.
 - The CCSS states that in K-5th grades, students must be able to:

- 
- Determine what text says explicitly.
 - Make logical inference from it.
 - Analyze their development.
 - Summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

- 
- Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently, and
 - Specifically, students are to analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text (CCSS, 2013).

- 
- It is important that the library and classrooms provide materials to support the diversity of its users.
 - The library and the classrooms can provide struggling students with multicultural literature that enhances the cultural perspectives of each other.



- Teachers must have an open mind to understand cultural diversity by removing barriers in the classrooms.
- America offers one to practice their faith, and speak their language as they please.

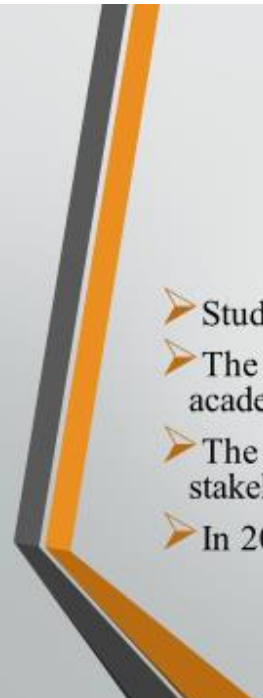
- We, as teachers can begin by removing these barriers by incorporating nonfiction literature and literacy strategies daily in the classrooms.
- A good daily dose of literature from diverse cultures in the classrooms will prepare students for a multicultural society.

Problem Statement


- The goal was to explore how reading nonfiction African-American folktales to struggling readers in second, third, and fifth graders in north Louisiana will affect their comprehension skills, and attitude toward other cultures other than their own.

Background History of Bayou School

- A small Pre-Kindergarten-Fifth grade African-American school.
- Enrollment average 350 students.
- School is rated as a D school.
- Average test score is in the 50% percentile.

- 
- Students on free or reduced lunch are 100%.
 - The mission of the school is to function as a team to improve academic standards.
 - The goal of the school is to raise the expectation to all stakeholders to ensure that “No Child is Left Behind.”
 - In 2011-12 recognized as the “top gained school.”

Purpose of the Study

- 
- Was to explore how three elementary teachers, one reading/library media specialist along with eight African-American students in grades second, third, and fifth grades utilize a variety of nonfiction African-American folktales in their classrooms and the library.

Research Questions

Students:

- Why do students think folktales have heroes?
- What are some traits and/or characteristics that students would like for their hero to have?

Teachers:

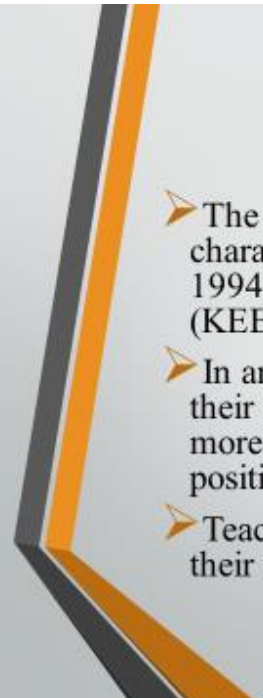
- How are elementary teachers implementing the use of folktales in the classrooms?
- What challenges do elementary teachers face with the implementation of folktales?
- What are elementary teachers' and/or students' perception of folktales?

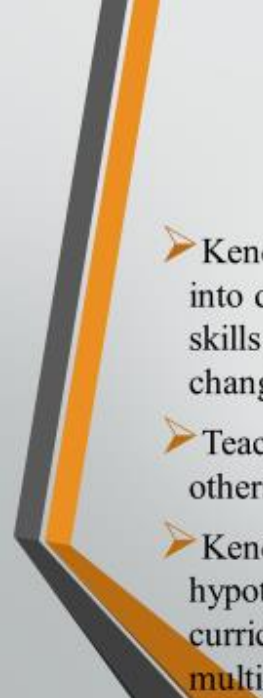
Importance of the Study

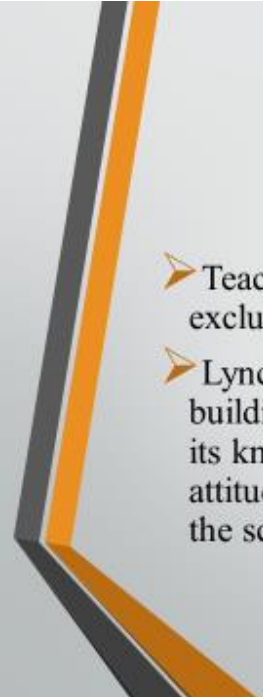
- The study is important, because children of all ages as well as adults must understand the importance of valuing each other's culture, beliefs, religious faith, education, community tradition, language, art, political ideas, and learning styles.
- Learning about multicultural education through literature will give students the opportunity to explore their cultural past and discover what the future might hold for them.

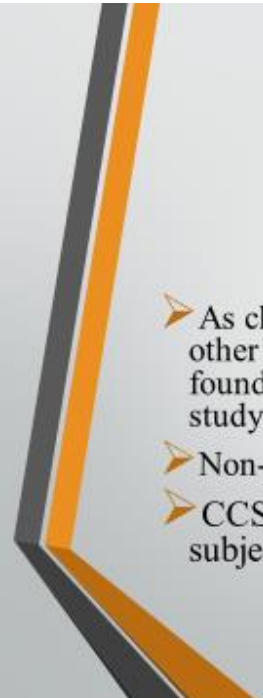
Chapter 2: Review of Literature

- Multicultural education reform started in 1960.
- Scholars and advocates stated in order to make a difference in the world, we all must put forth effort in understanding and appreciating our world cultures.
- We must develop a feeling to inquire into who we are and why we are here.
- In 1988, multicultural education curricula, instructional strategies, and documenting cultural characteristics were being developed for classroom practice.

- 
- The 1990 revealed the effects of teaching styles to match cultural characteristics and learning styles of different ethnic groups (Gay, 1994). Example the Kamehameha Early Education Program (KEEP, p. 11) and the African-Studies (p.12).
 - In another study cited by Gay, it states that when teachers adapt their instructional classroom interactional styles to approximate more closely those of the students, participation results are positive.
 - Teachers must be flexible in incorporating all learning styles of their students.

- 
- Kendall (1983) states that teachers must “prepare children to enter into diverse intergroup relations, as well as with given children the skills and knowledge needed to function in an increasingly changing world.
 - Teachers, teaching multicultural education know that to teach others about another culture is an unforgettable experience.
 - Kendall further states that it is crucial that teachers “provide a hypothetical environment through thoughtful selection of curriculum materials and learning activities that reflects a multicultural society.

- 
- Teachers must design a curriculum that is inclusive rather than exclusive and teach their students to be culturally diverse.
 - Lynch (1989) defines curriculum as the “sum of the normal building blocks of curriculum developed as planned by the school, its knowledge components (information skills, values and attitudes), and the complementary learning experience planned by the school.

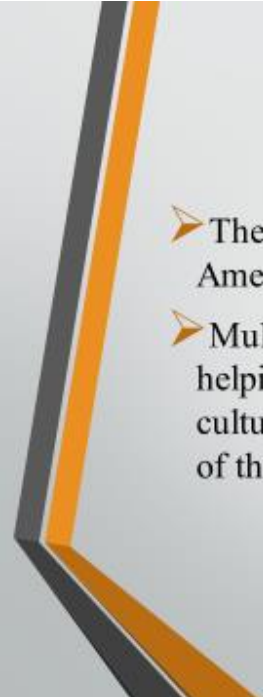
- 
- As children learn to respect each other, avoid conflicts, value each other's property, and appreciate their cultural groups; the researcher found it necessary to integrate non-fiction multicultural literature in this study with struggling second, third and fifth graders.
 - Non-fiction is defined as learning about real people, places and things.
 - CCSS require students to have prior knowledge of certain subjects.

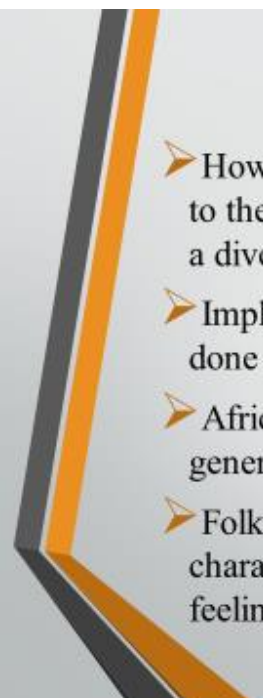
- Struggling readers are at least two grade levels behind their peers. These students have difficulties in recognizing simple words from the Fry's model of one hundred basic words.
- Marling and Paugh (2004) state that teachers should provide students with key support. That support is "to provide careful routine assessment that seeks to identify what struggling readers already know about language and literacy as the foundation on which reading instruction will build."

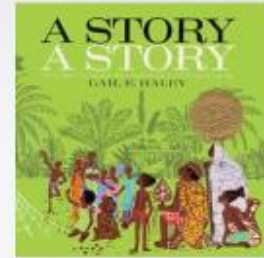
Struggling readers learned how to use:

- Sound-symbol relationships.
- Predictable grammatical structures and their knowledge of the world to make sense of texts.
- Comprehension strategies like predicting, visualizing, and re-reading.
- Their personal experience and background knowledge.



- 
- The researcher has read nonfiction multicultural African-American folktales to struggling readers.
 - Multicultural literature is often considered a powerful tool for helping students develop understanding, and respect for people of cultures different from their own as well as to gain an appreciation of their own heritage (Dressel, 2005).

- 
- How students learned and what they learned was very important to the researcher. Interpretation and comprehension was the key to a diverse classroom.
 - Implementation of a solid multicultural curriculum should be done soon.
 - African-American folktales have been passed down from one generation to another.
 - Folktales were popular with children, because the animal characters taught children how to care, have good manners, show feelings, and respect for others.



- Folk literature provided students the opportunity to adventure into an imaginable world filled with animal characters.
- A close relationship between humans and animals are an important subject in African-American folktales (Hamilton, 1995).
- Lester (1969) states that “folktales are stories that give people a way of communicating with each other about other and their fears, their hopes, their dreams, their fantasies, giving their explanations of why the world is the way it is; it is in stories like these that a child learns who his parents are and who he will become.”

This study covered the following subgroups (p.26):

- Ashanti
- Benin
- Cameroon
- Masai
- Nigeria



Chapter 3: Methods

Tools used in the case studies:

- Interview- Listened, talked and recorded information
- Observation- Observed and recorded
- Document Analysis- Read and documented

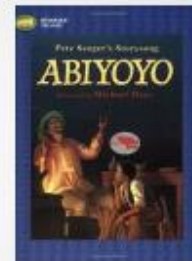
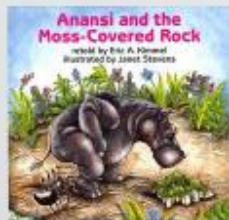
The Study

- Unit taught twice a week for a total of 6 lessons.
- Duration of the lessons were forty-five minutes.
- Books (paperbacks and hardbacks) ranked according to grade levels.
- Self and group selection.

Selection of Participants

- 2 girls and 2 boys
- 1 second grader (boy) P1-2
- 2 third graders (girls) P3-3 and P4-3
- 1 fifth grader (boy) P7-5
- STAR Reading Achievement for (ZPD) Zone of Proximal Development for student participants.
- Selection of teachers based on administration and researcher recommendations

Folktale Books



- Ranged from Central, South, East, West, and assorted cultural heritage books.

Activity Sheets

Includes:

- Folktale words to know and define
- Reading list of folktale books
- Compare and contrast map/ cloze/paragraph structure activities
- Vocabulary development/map your story/folktale writing journal activities

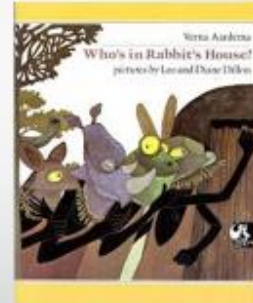
Chapter 4: Framework for the Study

Discussion of (p. 46):

- High-Stakes Testing Foundation
 - A Nation at Risk (1983)
 - No Child Left Behind Act (2001)
 - Example of tests: (ITBS) IOWA of Basic Skills, (SAT) Stanford Achievement Test and now Common Core Performance Achievement test.
- Struggling readers struggle with decoding words, reading fluently, concepts about print, alphabet knowledge, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, and understanding the message of the text.

The Start-Up of the Study


- Books used with participants
- Rubric of weekly activities
- Interpretation of survey data analysis (p.65)
- Biographical information and activities results




Chapter 5: Findings

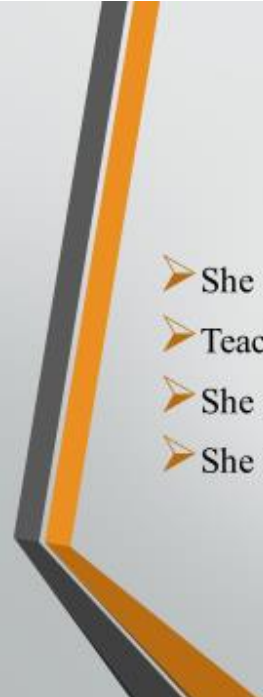
Case Study P1-2 (p.68)


- Boy-age 8
- (ZPD)Zone of proximal development-0.3-1.3
- Oldest of 2 children
- Problem working with large groups, but works well one-on one.

- 
- AD/HD-Serious behavior problems
 - Poor school attendance
 - Does not recognize basic words
 - Poor comprehension skills in recalling information
 - Average handwriting skills for a second grader
 - Must continue with immediate interventions

Case Study, P3-3 (p.72)

- 
- Girl, age 9
 - ZPD of 0.8-1.8
 - Oldest of 2 children
 - Spoiled and sometimes refuses to do her assignment. She wishes to have her way all the time.

- 
- She does not like to read. When she reads, her reading is average.
 - Teacher said that she is a mean student.
 - She recognized her basic words.
 - She has an average handwriting and comprehension skills

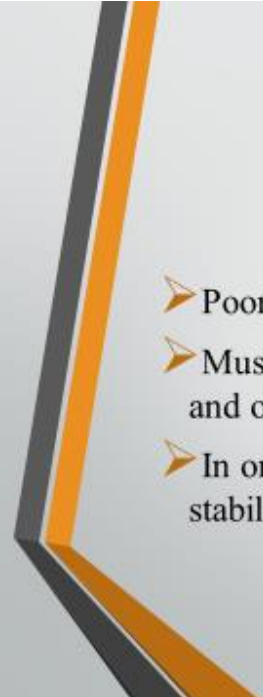
- 
- Struggled with alphabetical order.
 - Re-read stories for stronger comprehension skills.
 - Poor writing formation.
 - Continue to seek tutorial help.



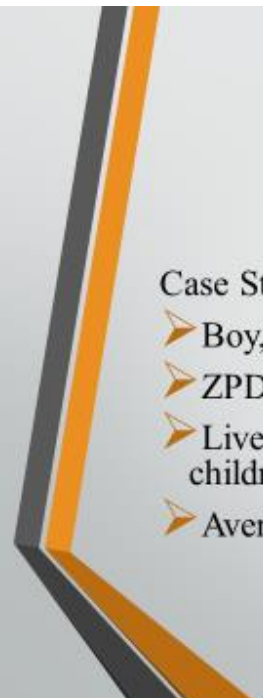
Case Study, P4-3 (p. 78)

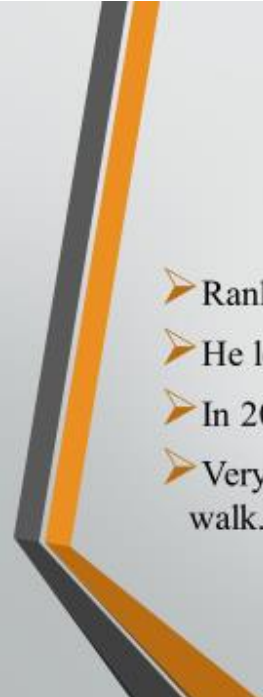
- Girl, age 9
- ZPD of 0.7-1.7
- Second oldest of 4 children.
- Shy student.

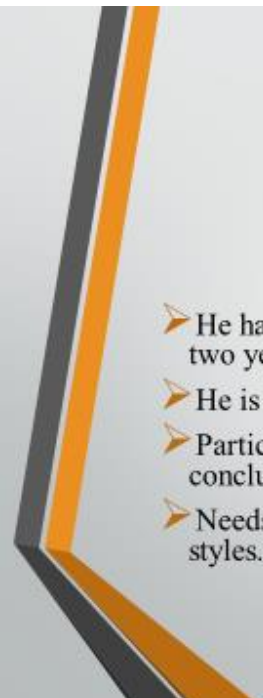
- She does not recognize basic words and alphabet.
- She is unable to read and comprehend stories, but likes to be read.
- Has language problems
- Excellent behavior
- She is currently being recommended for special services

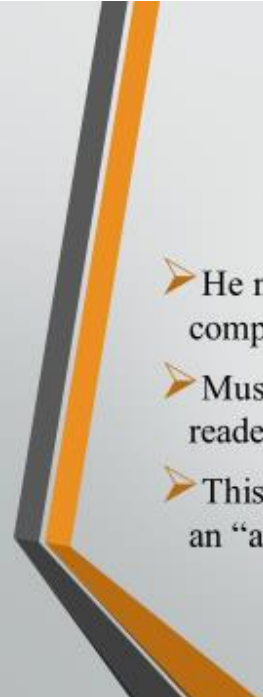
- 
- Poor writing formation.
 - Must continue with one-on-one services with concepts, variations and other skills mentioned previously.
 - In order for this student to move forward, she must maintain stability at one school.

Case Study, P7-5 (p.83)

- 
- Boy, age 12
 - ZPD of 1.5-2.5
 - Lives with grandparents majority of the time. Oldest of two children (child abuse case).
 - Average behavior, but has poor school attendance.


- 
- Ranked as a 4.5 student
 - He loves reading and likes to count money, but hates math.
 - In 2011, he was screened as an “at-risk” student.
 - Very modest student, he says he is good looking and has a cool walk.

- 
- He has to wear glasses, but does not wear them because he damaged them two years ago.
 - He is able to recognize his basic words and alphabets
 - Participant comprehension skills are normal and needs help with drawing conclusion
 - Needs help with letter formation. He can print, but can not write in cursive styles.

- 
- He needs to develop strong reading habits and learn to write complete sentences. This could be due to his speech problems.
 - Must develop a love for reading in order to become a life-long reader.
 - This participant must be monitored closely to avoid being labeled an “at-risk” student.

Student Research Question 1

Students (p.89):

- 
- Why do students think folktales have heroes?

Research Question Responses

P1-2 To solve problems and give people what they need to survive.

P3-3 Not for children to read the same book over and over and to make the stories interesting to help others.

Research question responses:

P4-3 To be wise and brave.

P7-5 To save lives and have strong morals and values.

Student Research Question 2:

- What are some traits and/or characteristics that students would like for their hero to have?

Research Question Responses:

- P1-2 To be careful, strong and brave.
- P3-3 To have confidence in themselves and to protect people.
- P4-3 To be yourself and powerful.
- P7-5 To be intelligent and brave.

Teacher Research Question 1:

Teachers (p.92):

- How are elementary teachers faced with the implementation of folktales?

Research question responses:

- T1-2 Only two titles are listed in the Story Town book. One title teaches teamwork and the other title teaches how to write opinionated composition.
- T2-3 Uses folktales to teach different genres.
- Reading Specialist states that teachers are implementing through on-line resources.

Teacher Research Question 2:

- What challenges do elementary teachers face with the implementation of folktales?

Teacher Research Question Responses:

- T1-2 The current curriculum listed only two folktales. Teachers must research for other stories.
- T2-3 The lack of folktales limited in the school.

Reading Specialist states that the resources are limited in the school, through the district and Common Core.

Teacher Research Question 3:

- How do elementary teachers align their teaching of folktales to the Common Core standards?

Teacher Research Question Response:

T1-2 Teachers are utilizing standards:

- RL 2.2 that recount stories.
- RL 2.5 describes the overall structure of a story.
- W 2.1 students must write opinion pieces in which they introduce the topic or book that they are writing about.

T2-3 States that the alignment for 3rd grade is presented in Louisiana State Standards curriculum.

Reading Specialist states that teachers are using CCSS initiative guidelines across all content areas and they must comply with core standards for reading, math, social studies, and language arts.

RL and RI Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of the text as the basis for the answers.



W- Writing standards for conducting short research projects that build knowledge about a topic through investigation of different aspects of a topic.

W-Recall relevant information from experiences or gather information from print and digital sources; take notes, sort evidence into provided categories, and provide a list of sources.

Chapter 6-Conclusion

- The use of formative and summative assessments were useful in conducting this study.
- The assessments and findings are indication that local, state and national government must make drastic changes in order for our students to become life-long readers and learners through Common Core standards.

- The challenges and alignment of the CCSS have robust potentials for becoming an effective where various groups can benefit from this study.
- The findings from this study proves that CCSS curriculum is fragile.
- We must act now in evaluating our curriculum or we will lose our valuable commodity-our children.

Thank You For Your Time and Support.



Have a great summer!

Appendix 37- The Graduate School-Louisiana State University

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL--LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY

We, the Committee, have given Gail Guidry Griffin
(name)

(89-767-1727) the Final examination for the degree of
(LSUID) *(circle one)

Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction on 5 June 2014
(degree) (field) (date)

and report the following result **Fail.** The undersigned committee members were
present and voted as circled: c rc e one)

☒ P or F Earl O. Cheek Jr. P or F _____
(Committee Chair)

☒ P or F [Signature] P or F _____

☒ P or F Amela B Blanchard P or F _____

☒ P or F Jenna Dauson P or F _____

Approved _____ Date _____
(Dean of the Graduate School)

****To be returned to the Graduate School****

Please remember to:

1. Circle the appropriate type of examination - General or Final.
3. Use the correct degree and field (see pgs. 7- 9 in the Graduate Bulletin).
4. No one can sign on behalf of another professor; original signatures are required.
5. If someone is replaced, please notify the Graduate School in advance by memo.
6. If a student fails the exam, please send a memo with this form specifying if student will be allowed to retake the exam and any time constraints.

DOCTORAL EXAMINATION AND DISSERTATION REPORT

Candidate: Gail Guidry Griffin

Major Field: Curriculum and Instruction

Title: A Qualitative Study Utilizing Non-Fiction African-American Folktales: Process and Product with Struggling Second, Third, and Fifth Graders in North Louisiana



Approved:


Major Professor and Chairman

Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:



Date of Examination:

5 June 2014

THE VITA

Gail Guidry Griffin works as a library media specialist in Louisiana. She serves as a public library trustee in the city where she resides. Mrs. Griffin was born into a family of sharecroppers. Mrs. Griffin has revealed that her dream has come true. She is now a first time journal writer. Her article titled "Steps for Evaluating a Fifth Grade Science Collection" was featured in the March/April, 2011 issue of the *Library Media Connection*. Now, she waits word from publishers regarding her book "*Sugar Cane Farming in Southwest Louisiana: Ooh, Ooh, So Sweet the Process and Product.*"

While employed, Mrs. Griffin was instrumental in getting all libraries automated and providing personal identification cards with pictures of students. In 2009, Mrs. Griffin did the draft design of the exterior and interior for a new library media center at the school where she previously worked. Students are enjoying this new facility as learning is taking place. Her professional involvements includes; American Library Association, United for Libraries, American Association of School Librarians, Public Library Association, National Education Association, Louisiana Education Association, Louisiana Library Association, and numerous reading associations.

Mrs. Griffin has a Bachelor of Science Degree in Elementary Education with a minor in Library Science. She has a Masters' Degree in Guidance/Counseling and a Master of Library Science Degree. She has completed all of her advance course studies for her PhD in Library/Information Studies and Curriculum/ Instruction with emphasis in reading. During her casual time she enjoys: reading, writing, photography, gardening, fishing, farming, and spending enjoyable time with her sons and family.